HOW TO WIN AT HOME VIDEO GAMES

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Whether you've just purchased your first game system, or you're already an expert home video player, you've come to the right place!

How to Win at Home Video Games will show you how to play — and master — 14 of the most challenging home video games available today. For the beginning player, we'll guide you through the vast complexities of each game: controllers, elements, variations, the works — nothing has been left out! For the hard-core Video Ranger, we'll also give you proven, in-depth strategies that will turn your good game into a *great* one!

What's more, we've included mini-strategies and reviews of 56 additional games, complete with ratings and price ranges. We'll help you wade through the sea of game cartridges available and help you pick the best ones for your home video system. We've even included a summary chart of these games that you can use as a handy buying guide.

If you don't already own a home video system, or are looking to upgrade your present one, read on. We're going to take a close look at some of the many game systems on the market, and the relative merits and drawbacks of each.

HOME VIDEO HARDWARE

A few years ago, buying a home video game system was easy. You went out and bought one of the many versions of "Pong" that were available, and that was that. You may have had a couple of game variations built into the system, but it was still the same basic game. Period.

Today, however, it's a different story. Consider, that in the last year:
● The number of home video game systems available has doubled, from four to eight.
● About 80 new Atari VCS-compatible cartridges and 18 Intellivision cartridges were introduced by not less than 16 different manufacturers, many of whom didn't exist a year ago.
● The number of game cartridges available for the Atari VCS system alone shot up to over 150.

Talk about confusion for the first-time buyer! Which system should you choose? Like everything else, it depends on what you want. Some systems offer terrific graphics, some are easy to play, others specialize in strategy games, and so on. Remember, a game system is no better than its cartridges. If you're thinking of buying a system, check the manufacturer's cartridge library to see if the type of games you like to play are available for that system. Also, see if outside manufacturers are making games for that system — often they're better than those from the original manufacturer.

In the end, it is you, the consumer, who must make the ultimate decision. To help you make that decision, let's take a look at some of the major home video game systems available today.

Atari has the least expensive system, and it was hot stuff when it was first introduced. Today, however, it pales in light of competitive systems. Two outstanding things work in Atari's favor. First of all, its cost. You get a lot of entertainment for your money. Second, Atari holds the rights to some of the most popular arcade video games (*Asteroids, Pac-Man, Defender, Space Invaders,* and *Berzerk,* for example). Although the home versions differ — sometimes drastically — from the originals, the game programs are as close as they can successfully make them.

In addition, many different companies make game cartridges that are compatible with the Atari VCS. Some of them, such as Activision and Imagic, turn out superior games with terrific graphics. This is another plus for the Atari system, the sheer number of cartridges (over 150) available for it.

On the negative side, we feel that: 1) there are too many wires connecting too many parts (to the TV, the wall outlet, the joysticks, and the paddles); 2) the TV makes a lot of static when a cartridge is removed; 3) graphics, especially in older games, are quite poor; and, 4) too many game options are packed into each game cartridge, and you must scan through them all to get to the one you want to play.
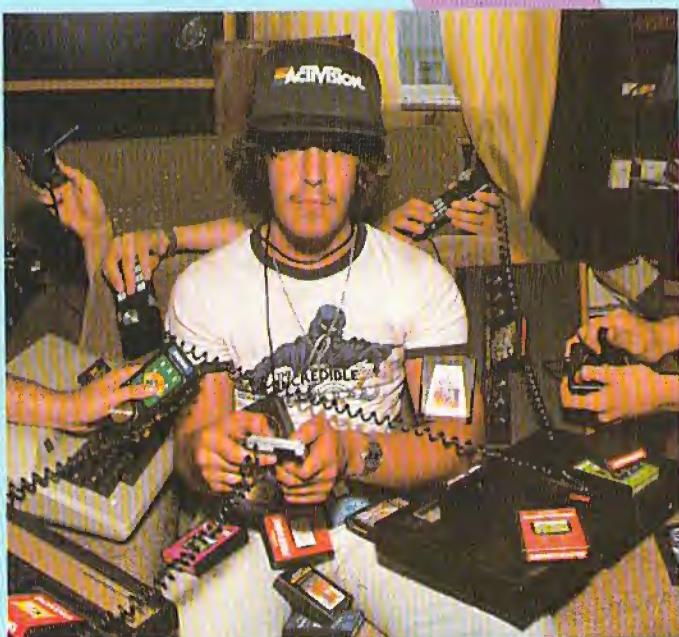
Atari is still, however, the so-called Giant of the industry. It's a fun, versatile system at a low price.

Atari is introducing a new system this winter called the **Atari 5200**. It will carry a hefty retail price ($299) but promises to be worth it, especially for hard-core gamers. The console is sleeker, and there are fewer cords and no annoying "white noise" when you change a cartridge.

However, it's the games themselves that promise to be the big selling point of the 5200. Sophisticated microprocessors and innovative designs will provide some of the finest graphics and sound in the industry. At least ten cartridges will be available this winter, such as *Space Invaders, Missile Command,* and *Asteroids.* The 5200 version of *Pac-Man* promises to be an exact replica of the arcade original (the VCS version was not), right down to the entertaining "intermissions."

Atari 5200 owners will eventually be able to buy an adapter that will allow them to continue playing their old VCS cartridges on the new system. A voice synthesizer will also be available in the future. It looks like the system to beat in 1983.

Intellivision by Mattel has, up to now, produced the best home video audio/visuals in the business. Their sports games are legends. The reason the Intellivision displays are so exceptional is that they use more space in their cartridges for one game. Remember how Atari puts several games in one cartridge. In a sense, Intellivision uses all that space for one fascinating game. Each cartridge comes with two overlays for the system's keyboard controllers. What's more, a voice module will soon be available for the system. New games will feature voices that "talk you through" the action. Also, outside manufacturers, such as Imagic, are beginning to manufacture games for the Intellivision system.

On the negative side, Intellivision games are often needlessly complicated. Some games require that you utilize up to 17 different controls during the action. Also, instead of a joystick, the Intellivision controllers feature a "direction disc" which you must press in any of eight spots. It's really a joystick without the handle — we miss the handle.

Odyssey2 is the mid-priced home video game system. And it is probably the most unusual system of the bunch. It comes equipped with a full alpha-numeric (letters and numbers) keyboard that looks just like a typewriter. It features some truly original game cartridges, not the least of which is a series of "Master Strategy" games that combine both board and video games into one challenging contest.

On the negative side, most of the other Odyssey2 game cartridges do not compare favorably to those in comparable systems. The graphics and game play are often basic and boring. North American Phillips Corp. (Magnavox), who makes Odyssey2, has always been a middle-of-the-road electronics manufacturer. That's exactly what this system is, middle-of-the-road.

ColecoVision promises to give both Atari and Intellivision a run for their money. The games provide the best sound and graphics this side of the Atari 5200, and for less money (retail price is $199). The game comes packed with a *Donkey Kong* cartridge, and it is stunning. They've also jumped heavily into the arcade adaptation market, offering home versions of such coin-op games as *Venture, Lady Bug, Turbo,* and *Zaxxon.*

ColecoVision, like the Atari 5200, will prove to be a nice upgrade for the present Atari VCS owner. Coleco is planning to introduce a VCS cartridge adapter in 1983. Also on the way is an expansion module that will turn the system into a home computer.

We like this system — it provides arcade-quality games for little more than the price of an Atari VCS. Most people will find the controllers a bit hard to handle, though. The joystick is too stubby and the action is too stiff to make for quick responses, especially in games that require rapid cornering.

Also, we'd like the system a lot more if it weren't for the problems we experienced during testing. Our first ColecoVision unit had to be replaced by the manufacturer because of a faulty power source. Also, occasionally it took a few tries at plugging in and unplugging some of the cartridges before they would work. One game we received *(Smurf)* didn't work at all. We hope that these are only early-production bugs Coleco can work out of its system, because it's basically a lot of fun.

Arcadia has come up with what must be the most unique game system of all. Well, it's not actually a system unto itself, it expands upon the present capabilities of an Atari VCS. Called the "Super-charger," it plugs into the cartridge slot of an Atari VCS. You connect a wire to any cassette tape record-er and "load" a game program into the unit. The game programs, you see, are on normal audio cassettes, not microchips. (You play the tape for about 30 seconds and the Supercharger holds the game program in its mem-ory until you turn off the VCS unit.) The graphics and sound are far superi-or to Atari VCS games, at roughly half the price (re-tail is $14.95 per game; the Supercharger — packed with one game — retails at $69.95). This may very well be the way of the future in home video games.

Other home entries include systems by Astrocade, Vectrex, Emerson, and Creativision. The games reviewed here, however, are for the previously dis-cussed systems: Atari VCS; Intellivision; Odys-sey2; ColecoVision; and Arcadia.

CARTRIDGE INFORMATION AND RATING SYSTEM
At the opening of each game discussion or review we've included some important consumer in-formation regarding the cartridge. First, we list the name of the manufac-turer and for which video game system it is designed. Second, we give the manufacturer's suggested retail price and a low price range based on our research of typical video game dealers. Next, we provide the number of players that can participate in the game.

Finally, each of the car-tridges presented in these pages is rated on a four-prong system. Each is given a basic rating and is then evaluated on a one-to-ten scale according to the cartridge's graphics, game play, and longevity.

Rating indicates who we feel the cartridge is de-signed for. A "G" rating means the cartridge is for "general audiences." Anyone can easily pick up and play a "G-Rated" game, although it may be too easy or too "cute" for advanced videogamers. A "PG" rating indicates that the game is still acces-sible to a wide range of players but is challenging enough to hold everyone's interest. The children may even need to give their elders "parental guid-ance" on how to play the game. An "R" rating is given to games we feel are too difficult for the very young and more casual video players but provide an excellent challenge for advanced players. An "X" rating applies to games that would appeal *only* to hard-core strategy and action gamers. "X-rated" games are definitely not for the masses.

Graphics refers to the audio/visual aspects of the game. A game such as the original "Pong," without much in the way of graphics or sound would get a "1," while a game that duplicates the looks and audio of a good arcade game would receive a "10."

Game Play rates how much fun and challenging a game is. "1" would indicate a totally boring game, while a "10" would represent the ultimate challenge.

Longevity indicates how long we feel the game will be of interest to the purchaser. A "1" game would begin to collect dust on the shelf after the first play; a "10" game would be a constant source of entertainment long after its initial purchase.

Note: If at all possible, "test drive" a game cartridge you are unfamiliar with before purchasing it. The game that appears on your TV set never looks like the wonderful artwork presented on the package. Use our ratings as a guide, but we suggest you see the actual game for yourself before investing in it. If the store where you buy cartridges will not let you see the game in play before buying it, make sure they will take a cartridge back if it does not work or if you do not like it. If the retailer will allow neither, we suggest you take your business elsewhere. At $20-$40 per game, few can afford to buy cartridges that will just sit on the shelf.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
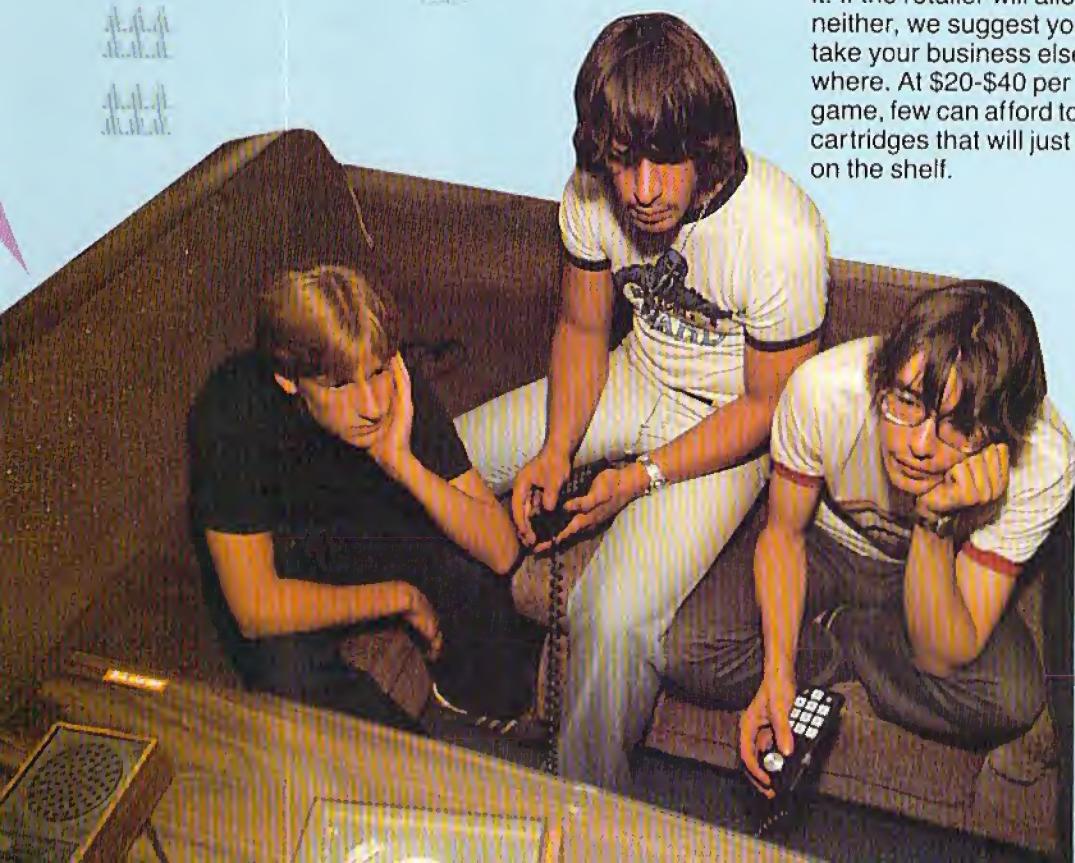
ASTEROIDS

Ordinarily, when you get a bunch of rocks thrown at you, it's not a whole lot of fun. But when it's your TV set that's doing the throwing during a game of Atari's *Asteroids*, well, that's another story.

In *Asteroids*, you pilot a spaceship that's free-floating through the middle of a never-ending Asteroid belt. To make matters worse, while you blast and/or dodge your way through the space debris, your ship is attacked by merciless Satellites and UFOs.

Asteroids is one of those "must have" Atari cartridges. First off, it's a great deal of fun to play. Secondly, it's a game your non-Atari-owning friends will want to play when they visit. Finally, you need one — if nothing else — for the practice. It's a strong possibility that your Atari-owning friends also own *Asteroids* cartridges — you don't want to look bad when you visit them and get creamed playing the game, do you?

Asteroids is a fun game to play. And when was the last time you could say you had fun while getting rocks thrown at you?

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$37.95/$27.00-30.00
1 to 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

OBJECTIVES

To destroy Asteroids, Satellites, and UFOs for points and keep your Spaceship alive for as long as possible.

CONTROLLERS

Asteroids is played using the Atari joystick controller. The game should be played using a light touch on the joystick at all times. Before you can score high at Asteroids, you must practice all of the joystick's functions thoroughly.

Moving the joystick to the right rotates the Spaceship clockwise; moving the joystick to the left rotates it counterclockwise. The slightest push forward on the joystick will thrust the Spaceship in the direction it is pointed. Too heavy a hand will thrust the Spaceship out of control. To stop or slow down a drifting Spaceship, point the ship in the opposite direction of its movement and hit the thrust control.

ELEMENTS

Spaceship: This is you, free-floating through wave-after-wave of Asteroids. You can move anywhere on the screen, using your thrust controls. If you move off one side of the screen, you will "wraparound" and reappear on the other side (top/bottom or left/right). Though you have total freedom of movement, you are almost always better off staying at the center of

the screen — where you begin — and firing at the Asteroids drifting around you. This eliminates the possibility of accidentally running into an Asteroid.

Asteroids: These space boulders come in three sizes — small, medium, and large. They drift in straight paths and at only slight angles. Asteroids on the right side of the screen initially travel from bottom-to-top; Asteroids on the left side of the screen travel from top-to-bottom. Like your spaceship, Asteroids traveling off one side of the screen will "wrap around" and reappear on the other side. When you clear the screen of Asteroids, a new wave of Asteroids will appear. Cleared Asteroid screens reset indefinitely.

Large Asteroids: Each screen begins with only large Asteroids. They move the slowest of the three sizes of Asteroids and are worth 20 points each when destroyed.

Medium Asteroids: When a large Asteroid is destroyed, it breaks up into two medium Asteroids. These move faster than do large Asteroids and are worth 50 points each when destroyed.

Small Asteroids: When a medium Asteroid is destroyed, it is reduced to one small Asteroid. Small Asteroids move the swiftest of all; they are worth 100 points each when destroyed.

Satellites: These missile-firing attackers appear on the screen only when the difficulty switch is set in the "A" position. They can be destroyed either by

your torpedo fire or by crashing into an Asteroid. Thus, they do not usually cause a problem when the screen is filled with Asteroids — chances are they will do themselves in by crashing into one of them. Satellites give off a low-pitched engine sound and are worth 200 points each when destroyed.

UFOs: These missile-firing craft are smaller, faster, and deadlier than Satellites. They appear on the screen only when the difficulty switch is set in the "A" position and you have reached approximately 7,500 points. Again, UFOs can be destroyed either by torpedo fire or crashing into an Asteroid. However, because of their speed and accuracy, you should be prepared to fire upon them immediately once you hear their high-pitched engine sounds. They are worth 1,000 points each when destroyed.

Hyperspace: This makes your Spaceship disappear from the screen for a split second and reappear at another, randomly selected point. Hyperspace should only be used in case of an emergency, however, such as when you are about to crash. This is especially true when the screen is filled with Asteroids. The location you Hyperspace to may be no safer than the point you Hyperspaced from. We suggest you repeat Hyperspacing in this situation until you settle into a screen location you can blast your way out of.

Shields: This feature allows you to temporarily protect your Spaceship with an impenetrable force-field. If they are activated for more than two seconds, your Spaceship will be destroyed. Note that a slow-moving large Asteroid takes a little more than a second to pass over you. Proceed with caution. If you rely too heavily on Shields when caught in the middle of an Asteroid belt, you're sure to destroy yourself.

Flip: This enables you to change the direction of your Spaceship 180 degrees when activated. This allows you to quickly eliminate Asteroids on two sides of you without rotating your Spaceship. You'll find this feature is not as useful as it sounds. Hyperspace and Shields can keep you alive for longer periods of time.

VARIATIONS

Asteroids features 66 games for one or two players, and includes two children's variations. Game selections determine the speed of the Asteroids (fast or slow), thresholds at which extra lives are earned (5,000, 10,000, 20,000, or not at all), and which special features are included in the game (Hyperspace, Shields, Flip, or no features).

We like Game 2 for a real challenge — fast moving Asteroids, Hyperspace, and bonus ships every 5,000 points (in the "A" difficulty position with Satellites and UFOs, of course).

STRATEGIES

The best overall strategy for winning at *Asteroids* is probably the most basic — don't move your Spaceship unless you have to. Stay at the center of the screen and pick off Asteroids, as illustrated in **Figure 1.** Resist the temptation to thrust your way toward the boulders. Sit tight and they will come to you. Remember, your thrust controls are highly sensitive. Anything but the slightest push on the joystick will send your Spaceship hurtling through outer space. Chances are, you'll crash into an Asteroid before you get a chance to slow down your ship.

Of course, there *are* times when you must leave the center of the screen, and there *are* situations where you must use your thrust controls. We'll discuss these a little later.

Sitting in the center of the screen, rotate your Spaceship until it is pointing to the side of the screen where the Asteroids are the closest. Again, use a light touch on the joystick or else you'll accidentally thrust or activate one of the special features. Fire at the closest large Asteroid first, then take care of the two resulting medium, and two resulting small Asteroids.

Do not shoot blindly and hit more than one or two large Asteroids at a time. If you do, you'll be stuck in the middle of a fast-moving belt of small and medium Asteroids. Re-

member, large Asteroids move slower than anything else in the game. If you plan your shots in this manner — large, medium, small — you can better manage the speed of the game. You'll also find that you survive for longer periods of time because you'll avoid emergency situations.

With practice, you'll be able to knock out an entire series of Asteroids (1 large, 2 medium, 2 small) with five quick, successive shots. You can do this by "tracking" the Asteroids across the screen, as illustrated in **Figure 2.** Point your Spaceship at the side of the screen (top or bottom) from where the Asteroids enter. Immediately blast a large Asteroid when it appears. Then, rotating your ship in the direction the resulting medium Asteroids are moving, quickly blast them at about mid-screen. Again, rotating your ship in the direction of the Asteroids, pick off the two small Asteroids before they leave the screen.

Remember, your Spaceship fires two Torpedoes at a time. If you're a good shot, you can take care of two Asteroids at once. But even if you're not such a hot shot, you can still expect about a 50 percent accuracy rate — if your first shot doesn't hit a target, chances are your second Torpedo will.
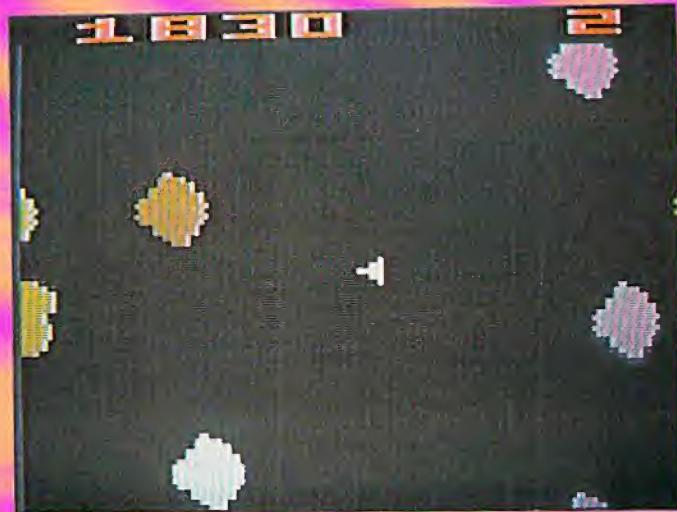
Figure 1
Stay at the center of the screen for as much of the game as possible.

Figure 2
Rotate and shoot at the same time and you can take care of at least five Asteroids with one pass.

Satellites and UFOs:
As mentioned earlier, these invaders aren't much of a threat when the screen is filled with Asteroids. Chances are they will self-destruct by crashing into one of the boulders. However, when there are fewer Asteroids on the screen, you should be

ready to shoot at them as soon as you hear their engines.

Satellites and UFOs always enter the screen from either the left or right-hand sides — never from the top or bottom. Since they move quicker and more erratically than do

Figure 3
Lying in wait for Satellites and UFOs when there are only a few Asteroids left on the screen is an easy way to rack up points.

Figure 4
Your Shields allow you to become invulnerable to the Asteroids, but for only two seconds. Engaging Shields for longer than that will blow you to smithereens!

Asteroids, it takes some practice to be able to knock them out quickly. It's best to spray the area in which they are moving with Torpedos when they are nearer the edges of the screen. There's a good chance they will head right into your missiles. The closer they get to your Spaceship, the more di-rect their flight patterns become. If you're quick, you can rotate your Spaceship in their direction and nail them when they get close.

An easy way to rack up big point totals is to clear the screen of all but one or two Asteroids and lie in wait for Satellites and UFOs (see Figure 3). They're easier to hit when you're not worrying about crashing into an Asteroid. This will also give you an opportunity to move around the screen a bit to go after your attacker. Again, however, leaving the center of the screen is not recommended unless you're able to defend yourself in case of an emergency. Satellites and UFOs are worth a lot of points (Satellites: 200 points; UFOs: 1,000 points).

Emergency Maneuvers: Yes, there will be times when you're caught in the midst of a group of fast-moving small Asteroids. There will also be times when a Satellite or UFO sneaks up on you from behind or fires a direct hit at you. What happens then? This is where the Hyperspace and Shields features come in.

Hyperspacing your way out of danger is the only time you should leave the center of the screen during the game. You will blank out of your original position and pop in at a randomly selected point on the board. As mentioned earlier, the location you Hyperspace to may be no safer than the spot you Hyperspaced from. If this is the case, you should re-peat Hyperspacing until you wind up in a safer area of the screen.

Note: Once you have Hy-perspaced your way out of danger, you should gently thrust your way back to the center of the screen before polishing off the final Asteroid in a wave

This saves you from almost certain destruction. As-teroids always reset to the right and left of center.

Shields can also help you escape destruction, but aren't as effective as Hyperspace. **Figure 4** illustrates this feature in use. Unfortunately, if you engage the shields for more than two seconds, you will destroy your own ship. Thus, this can be a dangerous maneuver when you must escape more than one Asteroid.

TESTIMONIAL
"When you're down to one Asteroid, wait until you see the UFO and go for it! It's worth 1,000 points. I like to wait for them — you can build up a lot of points early in the game.

"Never stand still, keep on moving. When you're go-ing to attack a UFO, thrust and fire at him at the same time. It's harder for him to hit a moving target."

Frank Cretella, age 16
Brooklyn, New York

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
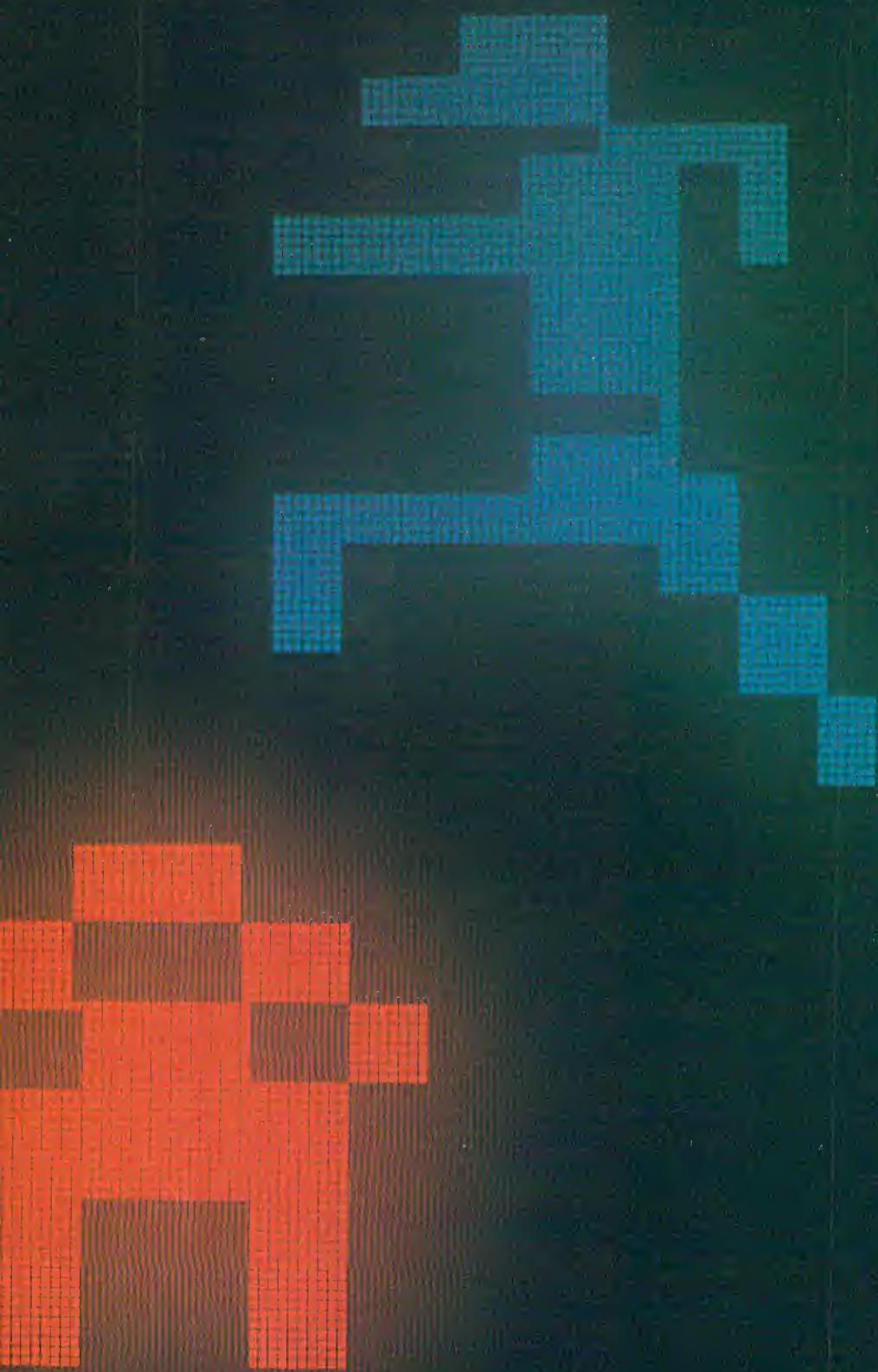
With the possible exception of hot dogs and apple pie, there's nothing quite as American as the game of baseball (never mind that it's equally popular in Japan). Thanks to the patriotic programmers at Mattel, you can enjoy the Great American Pastime in your own livingroom any time of the year with Intellivision *Major League Baseball*.

The Intellivision game not only plays like real baseball, it looks like real baseball and even *sounds* like real baseball.

You play the game on a real Baseball diamond. There are nine players on a team. The umpire calls the balls, strikes, and outs. A scoreboard records the progress of the game. You play for nine innings. If the score's tied after regulation play is over, you go into extra innings.

Most professional Baseball rules apply in Intellivision's *MLB*. You can hit singles, doubles, triples, and even slug out a home run. Your runners can steal bases and can be picked-off base. Defensively, you can perform double and even triple plays.

You'll hear simulated crowd cheers when you get a hit. Hit a home run and they'll go wild! You'll even hear the Intellivision umpire call you out! Actually, it sounds more like an electronic frog calling you out, but you don't want to argue with the umpire, do you?

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$25.00-30.00

2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 9
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

OBJECTIVES

To score more runs than your opponent in a nine-inning game of Baseball.

CONTROLLERS

Major League Baseball is played using the Intellivision controllers and the keyboard overlays included with the game cartridge. The home team (in blue on the screen) uses the right controller; the visiting team (in red) uses the left controller.

Defensive Controls:

More than anything else, *MLB* is a game of defense. Once you've mastered the defensive controls, you'll be able to play like a pennant contender every time. The keyboard overlay shows each of the nine players in their positions on the field. When the batter hits a ball, you must "activate" a player in order to be able to retrieve it and throw the ball to a base. There are no fly balls in *MLB*, only grounders. To field a ground ball you must first press down on the illustration of the player you want to activate. For example, if a ball is hit deep to left, you would press the left fielder. This will change the fielder's color from red or blue (depending on which team he's on) to black. This means he is activated.

You must now press down on the outer edge of the direction disc in the direction you want him to move (up, down, left, right, or one of four diagonal directions in between). Maneuver him over to the ball — he will automatically pick it up. Now, he must throw the ball, either to a baseman, to get the batter out, or to the pitcher if the runner has already stopped at a particular base.

Let's go back to our left fielder. The ball was hit deep to left, you've activated the left fielder, and moved him over to the ball. The runner has just rounded first base and is headed for second. Immediately press the illustration of the second baseman on the overlay. The left fielder will whip the ball over to second. At the same time, the second baseman will run over to catch the ball and cover the base. If the ball gets there before the runner does — he's out. If not, your opponent has a man on second.

You must then push down on the illustration of the pitcher to return the ball to the mound for the next pitch. A new batter will step to the plate, and the action will begin again. It's not really as tough as it sounds, though it can be a bit clumsy at times. Again, with practice, you'll be a pro.

Pitching is much easier. You can throw one of eight pitches by pressing the appropriate spot on the outer edge of the direction disc. Clockwise, beginning at 12:00, they are: fast ball, fast outside curve, outside curve, slow outside curve, slow ball, slow inside curve, inside curve, and fast inside curve. If the batter does not hit the ball, you must have the catcher return it to the mound by pressing the pitcher's illustration on the overlay.

If a base runner is attempting to steal a base during or after the pitch, have the catcher whip the ball to the player covering that base in order to tag him out.

Offensive Controls:

The game gets much easier when you're up to bat. When the pitcher hurls the ball at you, all you need do is press one of the action buttons on either side of the controller to swing at the pitch. Pressing the top button will cause the batter to swing away at the pitch. If you time your swing so that you hit the ball exactly as it crosses the plate, the ball will generally sail toward center field. Swing a little early, and it will go toward left field; swing a little late and it will head for right field. If you swing away and miss, of course, it's a strike — three and you're out.

Pressing the bottom button will cause your batter to bunt the ball. When bunted, the ball will gently roll into the infield. Note that, unless it is thrown far inside or outside, you cannot miss a pitch if you bunt the ball. Thus, if you've got two strikes on you and you don't want to risk striking out, try bunting. If nothing else, you may catch the opposition napping, especially if they're expecting you to swing away.

When you hit the ball, you can't just stand there — you must run the bases. To advance the runner, press and hold the direction disc to the right. To stop the base runner, take your finger off the disc. If you overrun the base, stop him and press the left side of the disc. This will move him back toward the base. If you're not exactly on the base and the opposition throws the ball to that base, you can be tagged out.

You can also lead off and steal bases in the same manner. With more than one runner on base, the direction disc controls only the lead runner. No double steals are allowed. For example, with runners on first and second, if you press the direction disc to the right, the man on second will steal third base. The man on first base, however, will stay on first.

Specific strategies on fielding, pitching, hitting, and baserunning will be presented on the pages that follow.

ELEMENTS

Players: The visitors are dressed in red uniforms and bat first. The home team is dressed in blue and bats last.

Scoreboard: The scoreboard at the bottom of the screen automatically keeps track of the innings, outs, balls, and strikes. The scoreboard at the top of the screen keeps track of each player's score.

VARIATIONS

Major League Baseball features four game variations for two players. Basically, these variations determine the speed of all the elements in the game — pitches, runners, fielders, etc. "Major League" speed is the fastest, and "Spring Training" speed is the slowest ("Triple-A" and "College" are in between). We like the Major League speed, but you will probably want to play the game at its slowest pace if you're a beginner.

STRATEGIES

In *Major League Baseball*, you can never play against the computer. You can only play against another real, live person. Obviously, this means we can't give you a single strategy that will work every time. Some of your opponents will be best at fielding, some at pitching. It will be up to you to exploit their individual weaknesses. It's up to us to tell you how to do that.

Defense: *Major League Baseball* is not a game of pitching, despite the fact that you can throw eight different pitches. A good batter will know a ball when he sees it coming. He'll prefer to wait for a strike he can hammer out of the park. So, mix up your pitches, for sure, but don't expect any no-hit games. This is a game of fielding and baserunning.

Remember, there is no such thing as a fly ball in this game — all runners must be either tagged or forced out at a base. So a good defensive player will try to pick up everything with his infielders. Keep your two fingers on the shortstop and second baseman.

When a ball is hit, chase it down with either of these two infielders. You'll need a good jump on the ball, though, so be prepared to pick the right man for the job. No sense chasing down a bunt with the right fielder!

Double plays are possible, particularly if the second baseman can tag a runner and then throw to first. It's somewhat harder, perhaps impossible, to perform two throws to get those outs.

The biggest worry for the pitcher is when there are men on base, because it's easy to steal in this game. However, the pitcher can pick off the runner simply by throwing the ball to the baseman covering the runner. If a runner has too big a lead he won't get back to the bag in time. On the other hand, if you try to pick him off, he might just head for second, third, or even home base, in which case you've got to run him down.

Figure 1

Your players are all in position, ready to begin a new game.

Figure 2

A base hit up the middle! Note that the pitcher has been "activated." He is closest to the ball. In this situation, the pitcher should throw to home base to prevent the other team from scoring a run.

Use the man with the ball to chase the runner almost all the way to the next base, then toss it to the man covering that base. If the pitcher suspects a steal, he can simply activate the catcher. The catcher will jump out in front of the plate and receive the ball, ready to whip it to second or third. There is no way a runner can get a jump on this strategy and he will be forced back, or out, if you get lucky. Use these pitch-outs to limit stealing. When the pitcher suspects a bunt, he should be ready to charge for it himself.

Figure 3
A round-tripper!

Offense: Offense is somewhat easier than defense, but that doesn't mean you can take it easy. Press the defense. Keep them on their toes. Steal as often as possible. Take large leads sometimes. Hit from one field to another, and throw in a few bunts with men on first or second base.

Don't forget the hit-and-run plays: With a good pitch on the way, send your base runner to the next base and take a swing at the ball. In fact, on every pitch with a man on base, the runner should jump as if he's going to run and make the final decision to do so once the batter takes a good look at the ball. If it doesn't look like a good pitch, return to the base. If it's a slow ball, keep going.

Remember, you want to vary your behavior. The first time you get a man to first base, swing at the first pitch and simultaneously try to steal second. Chances are you'll make it, and your opponent won't know how to psyche you out. He'll wonder if you're stealing a base in every situation from then on. Of course, you won't. Next time, let your batter take three or four pitches without swinging, while you repeatedly fake a steal. Get used to watching your opponent out of the corner of your eye. When he is running you down between bases and you see him press a button, head the other way immediately because it will mean he is throwing the ball.

With men on base, the lead runner is the only one you control, so don't watch the man going to first because he is controlled automatically. He will not overrun first base no matter what you're doing with the direction disc.

In batting, the same general rules that apply to real baseball also apply to this cartridge. Swing early and the ball will go to left field, swing late and it will go to right. Hit to the field away from where your lead base runner is heading. Alternate your swings to accommodate slightly inside or outside curves — they can be hit for distance just like a fastball. Hit a homer and the game will rub it in to your opponent.

But whatever you do, don't stand in the batter's box sweating when the pitcher delays. That is a ruse only little leaguers should fall for. There just aren't any pitches your opponent could be thinking of throwing that are worrisome in this game. Keep your mind on the baserunning.

TESTIMONIAL
"When I'm playing defense and the ball goes to left field, I will throw the ball to first base. The runner will probably run to second, and I can pick him off by throwing the ball between my first and second basemen.

"If there is a man on second base and one out, I will intentionally walk the batter and go for the double play."

Mark Vecci, age 14
Bridgeview, Illinois

BERZERK

Well, that's you in the Atari VCS game of the same name. In *Berzerk*, you're trapped in a never-ending series of maze-like rooms. In order to get out of a room with your hide intact, you must "recklessly defy" armies of hulking Robots. You can either run or shoot your way out, but beware — the Robots are armed with Lasers that can fry you like an egg.

Just when you think you've gotten the best of these mechanical terrors, their mentor, Evil Otto, bounces into the room. Looking for all the world like a "happy face" button, Otto is invincible. If he catches you, you're cooked!

The only way you can escape from the clutches of Evil Otto is to run for it. But don't run into one of the walls! The maze walls in *Berzerk* are electrified and are every bit as deadly as your attackers. When you finally do exit a room, there's no rest. You only enter another room with more Robots and another bout with the inimitable Evil Otto. *Berzerk* is right!

One of the nicest aspects of *Berzerk* is its accessibility. It looks easy. The maze room passageways are large, and the Robots are relatively small. However, looks are deceiving — *Berzerk* is not an easy game to master.

1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 7

OBJECTIVES

To destroy as many Robots for points in each maze room as possible without getting destroyed yourself.

CONTROLLERS

Berzerk is played using the Atari joystick controller (left controller only). The joystick action is responsive, but slow. This is a built-in feature of the game and is not the fault of Atari's controllers. Pushing the joystick in any of eight positions moves you in that direction (up, down, left, right, and four diagonal directions in between).

Pressing the action button fires your Lasers in the direction you have most recently moved. By pressing the action button and moving the joystick at the same time, you will be able to fire in the direction the joystick is moved. Your fire is relatively quick, but watch out — you cannot shoot and run at the same time. Hit the button and move fast to dodge Lasers.

ELEMENTS

Man: This is you, nameless and trapped, forever being pursued by the Robots and Evil Otto. As previously mentioned, you can move or fire in any of eight directions. Note that you can fire your Lasers on the diagonal; your attackers (the Robots) cannot. If you position yourself above or below them and just to their left or right, you will nail them every time.

You can leave one maze and enter another at any time via one of the exits.

You lose a life when either: a) your Man touches a wall; b) he touches a Robot; or c) he is attacked by Evil Otto. Death is not a pretty sight in *Berzerk*. When killed, your Man is horribly electrocuted for several seconds.

Robots: Relentless, merciless creatures set out by Evil Otto to destroy you. Fortunately for you, these attackers are also slow and stupid. You can easily outrun them, especially in early game screens when they move about half as fast as you do.

How stupid are they? The Robots are so stupid, they'll follow you anywhere on the screen. They'll even run right into walls in your general direction where they, like you, are destroyed. They cannot, however, follow you into another maze room.

Robots can fire Lasers horizontally or vertically, but not diagonally. As mentioned earlier, they're dead bolts when you can position yourself on the diagonal and blast away at them. Most Robots will go down with only one Laser blast. Occasionally, however, you will encounter an extra-durable Robot that will require two or more direct hits to die. They will never fire at you during the first maze in a game.

Robots gain movement and firing speed with each successive maze, up to screen 15. After that, the Robots' movement speed resets to that of the first maze, and progresses upward again from there. However, their firing speed remains equal to yours for the remainder of the game.

Robots are worth ten points each when destroyed. If all the Robots in a maze are destroyed when you exit it, you are awarded ten bonus points per robot eliminated. This, in effect, doubles your score.

Evil Otto: Although he may look friendly — like a smiley-faced beach ball — he's deadly. Evil Otto enters each maze approximately seven-to-ten seconds after you do. He always enters from the exact spot you do. You should not hang around and wait for him. However, even if you run, Evil Otto will chase you. He'll pass through walls and even destroy his own Robots just to get at you. If he catches up to you — WHAM! Evil Otto pulverizes you like a jackhammer!

Evil Otto cannot be destroyed (although in some game variations he can be temporarily stunned). Your best defense against Evil Otto is your own two feet — head for an exit, fast! What's more, once you've destroyed all the Robots in a maze, Evil Otto will pick up speed considerably. Be sure to save one Robot for the last second and zap it just as you are about to exit a room. Otherwise, Evil Otto will zap you first. He'll be moving about twice as fast as you will.

VARIATIONS

Berzerk features 12 games for one player and includes one children's version (also good for adult beginners). Game selections determine whether or not the Robots fire at you, thresholds at which extra lives are earned (1,000 points, 2,000 points, or not at all), and the behavior of Evil Otto. Depending on the game, Otto can either be invincible (he cannot be destroyed), rebounding (he can be temporarily stunned by your Lasers and "bounce back" in about five seconds), or not appear in the game at all. Difficulty switches are not used in *Berzerk*.

We like the games featuring firing Robots and an invincible Evil Otto. As far as we are concerned, all other game variations are merely practice runs that lead up to this, the Main Event.

STRATEGIES

Our strategies presented here are based on the most difficult *Berzerk* games — those with firing Robots and an invincible Evil Otto. They will, however, apply to a certain extent to all *Berzerk* variations.

Note that in *Berzerk*, the mazes appear in no set order — any of 16 mazes can come up at any given time. In addition, the number of Robots in a maze room varies from screen to screen. You may encounter two robots spread throughout the maze in one screen and five Robots crowding around you in the next.

For all 16 mazes, however, we suggest a "circular" approach to clearing the room of Robots. General patterns for clearing three of the most common maze formations are illustrated in **Figures 1, 2, and 3.**

As you begin the game or enter a maze room, immediately blast any Robots near you. The Robots will not move or fire for a second or two. This will give you an opportunity to get them before they get you first. However, be careful not to accidentally walk into a Robot when you begin a room. You may be surrounded by them at the very start of a maze. Keep your hand off the joystick until you see that you can move and/or fire safely.

After you've cleared some breathing room for yourself, begin to move in a circular motion around the maze. Don't delay. Remember, Evil Otto will enter the maze in a few seconds in the exact same spot that you did. Get away quickly — make him chase you.

Work your way around the room in a semi-circular pattern, blasting all Robots along the way. The idea here is to lure brawny, but not too brainy, Robots in your general direction. Since about half the Robots should be on the other sides of walls, they will walk *at* you but right *into* the walls, and they will be zapped. This, as far as you are concerned, is just as good as shooting them.

As you quickly make your way around the room, clearing it of Robots, be sure to leave at least one Robot alive. Preferably, he should be the one nearest the exit you are headed for. Remember, Evil Otto will travel relatively slowly when there are Robots left alive in a maze. But when you've killed them all, Evil Otto will suddenly speed up and travel at about twice the speed as your Man. When you are near the exit, shoot the final Robot and proceed to another maze.
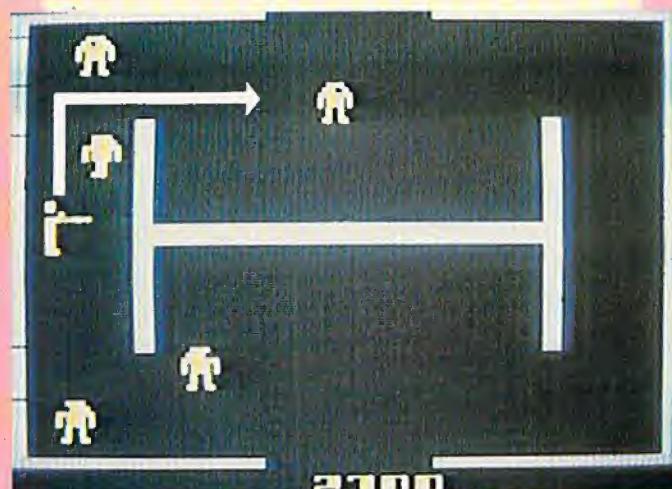
Figure 1
Shoot the Robots immediately above you, and circle toward the uppermost exit. This will draw the two Robots below you into the electrified walls.
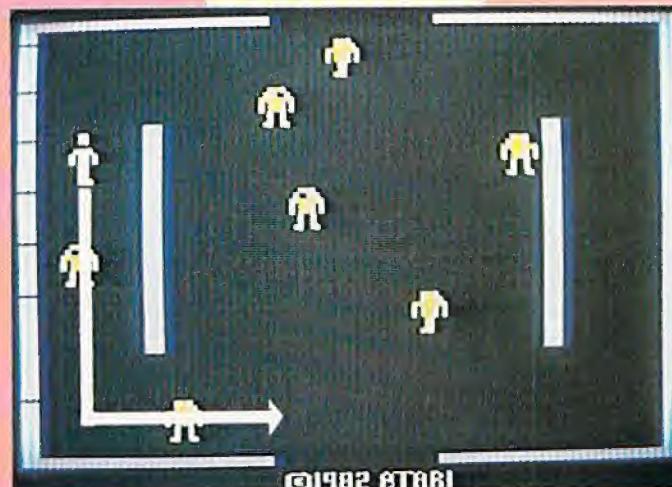
Figure 2
This is a bit trickier. Again, shoot the Robot closest to you, then circle toward the bottom exit. There is no center wall for the Robots to crash into, but you'll have more distance between you and them. This way, you'll be in a better spot to shoot at the Robots and dodge their fire.

Just so you can keep your bearings, remember that you will always enter a new maze at the opposite side of where you left the previous one. Thus, if you exit on the right, you will enter the next maze on the left, and so on. When the action quickens, you'll need to keep this in mind so you can quickly pick out your Man and get a jump on your attackers.
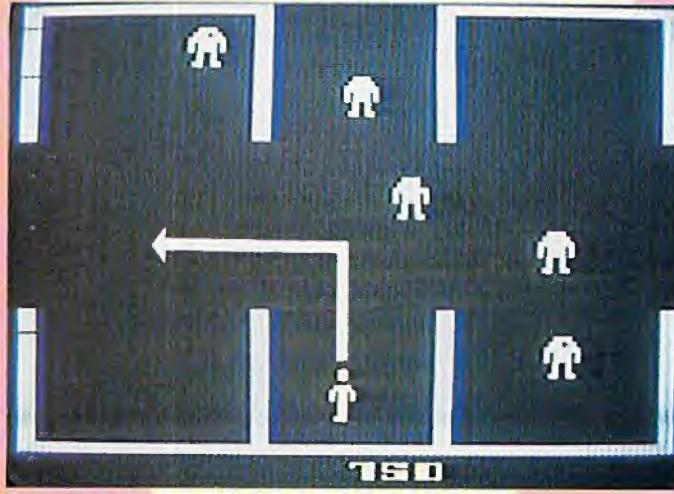
Figure 3

Move toward the left exit. You'll need to shoot the two Robots in the center of the screen and the one in the upper left-hand corner. The other two will walk into walls and take care of themselves.
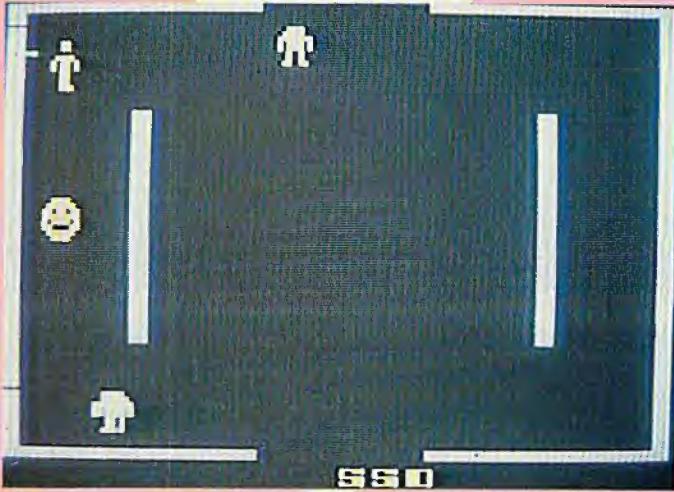
Figure 4

A Robot's Laser fire passing through your Man's neck. It can be done, but it's not an easy move, especially with Evil Otto on your trail.

Use the maze walls to your advantage, not only by luring the Robots into them, but by using them as protection, also. We suggest hiding behind walls where necessary to avoid a Robot's fire. After you dodge his Laser you can jump out from behind the wall and shoot back at him. Not unlike a scene from an old western movie.

One little-known feature of *Berzerk* is that you can escape death by having a Robot's Lasers actually pass through your body. What happens is you must position yourself so that a Laser blast slips through the "gap" between your Man's head and body. This maneuver is illustrated in **Figure 4.** It is, however, tricky. You must perfect it to the max before you can fully use it to your advantage. Even if you choose not to use this trick in normal game play, it's a great "show-off" maneuver to amaze your friends with when you demonstrate the game.

Killing Robots: As mentioned previously, Robots are vulnerable to diagonal fire. You can shoot on an angle — they can't. Also, when a Robot fires at you vertically, it is always from his right-hand side. This means that if you position yourself above or below and slightly to the left of a Robot, you will be out of the line of his fire. You can, however, easily zap him with a straight vertical shot.
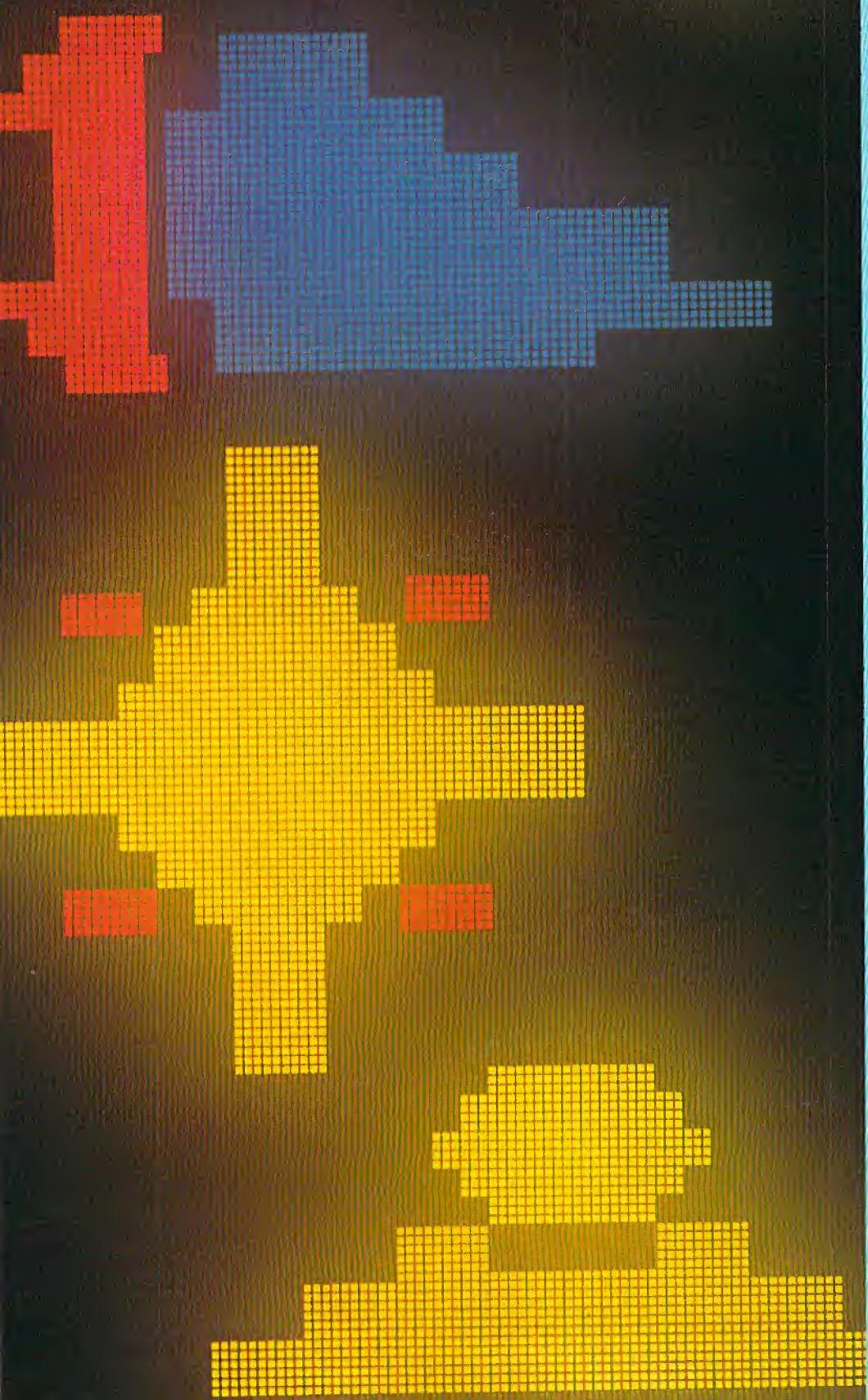
DEFENDER

There are eight million stories in the big city. This is one of them . . . .

You're the ace pilot of a Defender Ship patrolling the city. Suddenly, a wave of ruthless alien Landers descends from the skies. Their mission: to kidnap helpless Humanoids and transform them into hideous Mutants. Immediately, you rush to their defense, only to be met by an equally-ruthless force of Bombers, Swarmers, Baiters, and Pods. You've got to save the city and its inhabitants. Can you do it?

Of course you can, because you're playing an exciting game of Atari's VCS *Defender*. *Defender* combines fast action and good audio/visual effects in a much better-than-average alien shootout encounter.

The basic *Defender* concept remains true to the original arcade game. You command a Defender Ship saving Humanoids from the aforementioned Alien bad guys. You're equipped with Lasers and Smart Bombs that can clear the skyline of attackers with one shot. You can also Hyperspace your way to another part of town if the going gets especially tough (and the tough want to get going in a hurry). You can keep track of aliens that are out of your immediate view via a long-range Scanner at the top of the screen.

Eliminate one wave of extra-terrestrials, and another, more powerful wave will move in on you. Nothing's easy in the big city.

1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

OBJECTIVES

To rescue Humanoids and prevent them from being transformed into Mutants, and to destroy as many aliens as possible for points without being destroyed yourself.

CONTROLLERS

Defender uses the Atari joystick controller. The joystick action is quick and tight. It has to be, because when you're in the thick of combat, you'll have to make many sudden reversals of direction and changes in altitude. You can move your Defender Ship vertically, horizontally, and diagonally on the screen by pressing the joystick in the direction you want your ship to move. The action button fires your Lasers in the direction the ship is pointed.

ELEMENTS

Defender Ship: This is you, cruising the city skyline, defending yourself and the city's inhabitants against Alien attack. You are armed with an unlimited supply of Laser Missiles and a limited supply of Smart Bombs; you may also go into Hyperspace at any time.

You begin each *Defender* game with three lives. Additional lives can be earned for reaching 10,000-point threshholds. You lose a Defender Ship life when either: a) you are hit by an Alien's missile; b) you hit a Space Mine; or c) you crash into an Alien.

Humanoids: These are the people your Defender Ship must protect. They appear as small blips cowering near the buildings in the city beneath you. You begin each game with five Humanoids.

Throughout the game, Alien Landers will descend upon the city and kidnap helpless Humanoids. When this happens you will hear their shrill cries. You must immediately rush to the Humanoid's defense and rescue him before the Lander flies off of the top of the screen. If this happens, both Lander and Humanoid will transform into a dangerous Mutant.

To rescue a Humanoid, you must first shoot and destroy the Lander carrying him.

If the Humanoid is close to the bottom of the screen, you can let the Humanoid free-fall safely back to the city. However, if the Humanoid is higher above the city, you must catch him as he falls and return him to the city below. If the Humanoid is one-third of the way up the screen from the bottom or higher, and you do not catch him, he will fall to his death, and you will hear a crashing sound.

If a rescued Humanoid returns to the city before the end of a wave, you receive 1,000 points; if you are still carrying a Humanoid at the end of a wave, you receive only 500 points. For every Humanoid that survives an Attack Wave, you will receive 100 bonus points. All five Humanoids are restored at the beginning of every fifth Attack Wave.

When all five Humanoids have been destroyed, either by mutating or by falling to death, the city blows up and disappears! Mutant populations then inhabit what's left of the Earth. The game continues with only Mutant attackers until they either destroy your last remaining life, or until the fifth wave, when all Humanoids — and the city — are restored.

Landers: Looking like yellow diving bells, and worth 150 points each, Landers are your only opponents that pose a threat to the Humanoids. Landers will descend upon Humanoids and carry them to the top of the screen, where the two combine to form a Mutant.

Mutants: When a Lander reaches the top of the screen with a Humanoid in tow, he turns red, sprouts legs, and is thereafter called a Mutant. Mutants are worth no more points than Landers (150 points), but they are a much more challenging opponent.

Bombers: These slow-moving blue rectangles are worth 250 points each. They won't fire at you, but they will leave mines (small hard-to-spot white dots) in their path.

Pods: These large yellow stars are your most valuable opponent, at 1,000 points each. They are also relatively harmless. They simply drift slowly through space, oblivious to your presence.

Pods are not a threat in themselves, but they punish you when you shoot them by releasing clusters of Swarmers. Each Pod releases one or two clusters, which will immediately begin firing at you.

Swarmers: These small yellow Aliens always travel in groups of four, in a tight formation. One shot can destroy an entire group and net you 500 points. Swarmers are the best shots of all your opponents, so be careful when approaching them. They are extremely aggressive when on the main screen, but will become lost and confused for a few seconds when you move off the screen they're on.

Baiters: Baiters are the hardest opponent to shoot, both because they have the lowest profile and because they move quickly and erratically. They are worth 200 points when destroyed.

Scanner: The Scanner is the radar screen at the top of the playfield. Every blip on the screen represents an object in the game.

Smart Bombs: By detonating a Smart Bomb, you can destroy every Alien on the screen, and earn points for each Alien so annihilated. You begin each game with three Smart Bombs. Extra Smart Bombs are earned at each 10,000-point plateau. Smart Bombs are detonated by flying your Defender Ship off the bottom of the screen and, at the same time, pressing the action button.

Hyperspace: Using the Hyperspace feature can get you out of a tight spot. Hyperspace will allow you to disappear from the screen and automatically reappear in another section of the city. To engage Hyperspace, fly your Defender Ship off the top of the screen and, at the same time, push the action button.

STRATEGY:

At the start of each Attack Wave, a Bomber will appear directly in front of your ship. Try to shoot him right away. If he gets past the Defender Ship, just turn around and he'll come right back. (Bombers always move opposite to the direction that the Defender Ship is pointing.) This is also useful if a Bomber comes onto the screen when you already have your hands full. Just turn your back to the Bomber, and he'll obediently drift away.

When you fire a Laser Missile, you'll note that your ship disappears from the screen for a split second — only your Lasers will be visible (as illustrated in **Figure 1**). This is a programming limitation that can sometimes be used to your advantage. For the period of time in which your Defender Ship "blanks out," it will not crash into an Alien — it will pass right through it. Thus, if you're caught in the midst of an Alien swarm, keep firing your Lasers and move at full speed ahead. This way, if you do not blast all of the Aliens, you have a chance of safely passing through them due to this programming error.

Just beyond where the first Bomber appears, there will be two or more Pods. When you shoot these, watch for the clusters of Swarmers to appear. Often, one of them will appear directly on top of your ship, since they don't necessarily appear where the Pod was shot. After the first two waves, use a Smart Bomb on the Pods.

When shooting the Swarmers, don't get too close to them. They're good shots at close range, and can fire at any angle. Try to shoot them as soon as they come onto the far edge of the screen. If you miss there, turn and pull away before firing again. Otherwise, you may find yourself on an unavoidable collision course.

Once you've cleaned up the Bombers, Pods, and Swarmers, your goal should be to eliminate the Landers before they can abduct all of the Humanoids. To do this, you must fly quickly. Don't wait for the Landers to come to you because this gives the Landers on the far edges of the scanner enough time to find the Humanoids and kidnap them. Just keep moving to the right, and shoot every Lander that you come upon.
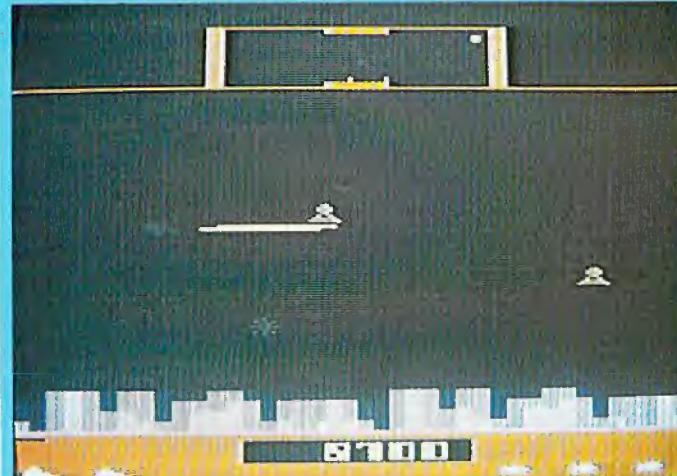
Figure 1
When you fire your Lasers, your Defender Ship will "blank out." In this mode, Aliens and their Missiles can pass through the location of your ship, and you will not lose a life.

Figure 2
A Lander captures a Humanoid! The Defender Ship must destroy the Lander and rescue the Humanoid before both combine to form a Mutant.

When you hear the sound of a Humanoid being captured (a shrill squeal), immediately try to locate the offending Lander on the Scanner. If he is nearby, fly directly to him and rescue the Humanoid (shoot the Lander and catch the Humanoid in mid-air — see **Figure 2**.

Note that as long as you hold a Humanoid with your Defender Ship, no other Humanoids can be abducted during an Attack Wave. This means it is a good idea to hold onto a Humanoid after you've rescued him and then destroy the remainder of the Alien attackers. Then,

Figure 3
The Baiter is your most elusive enemy because of its low-profile and erratic movement.

Figure 4
All-Mutant free-space! Survive this and all of your Humanoids will be restored at the beginning of each fifth wave.

you will not be distracted by Humanoid kidnappings. Be sure to return the Humanoid safely to the city before the end of the wave, however, for extra points.

If the Lander and Humanoid are at the far edge of the scanner, Hyperspace may get you to them more quickly than flying would. And if there are many opponents between your ship and the Lander, try flying in the Invisible Trench, where your ship is invincible.

Invisible Trench? Yes, there is an area at the bottom of the screen — below ground level — where your ship is free to move, but the opponents and their shots cannot reach you. You can even take a break by putting your ship in that position. But if there are Landers left in the wave, they'll carry away the Humanoids while you're away. Also, remember that if you fire while in the Trench, you'll detonate a Smart Bomb — the habit of constantly firing can deplete your Smart Bomb reserves in a big hurry.

Regardless of how carefully you play, you'll occasionally lose all five men and be thrown into "Free Space," or the Mutant Takeover. When this happens, the screen will flash bright white for a second, and all of the remaining Landers will immediately turn into Mutants (see **Figure 4**). If you can stay calm through this transition, you'll often be able to shoot many of the Mutants as soon as they come onto the screen. And once the Mutants begin to overwhelm you with sheer numbers, you can duck into the Invisible Trench for a breather. To survive Free Space, you must make good use of the trench for easy escapes, short breaks, and effective Smart Bombs.

TESTIMONIAL
"Get as many Smart Bombs as you can early in the game. Use them only when you're in a jam.

"Don't shoot the Pods until you've killed everything else. They turn into Swarmers that will be easier to avoid if you're not worrying about crashing into anything else on the screen.

"When you're down to only one Humanoid, carry it around until the end of the wave — this way you can protect it."

*Scott Rodgers, age 17
Bridgeview, Illinois*

23

DEMON ATTACK

One of Alfred Hitchcock's most famous films featured flocks of birds suddenly attacking humans.

The same theme runs through the Imagic video game, *Demon Attack*. Only this time, it's you who's being attacked by wave after wave of mad, killer *outer space birds*!

Demon Attack is an impressive game, delivering arcade-quality audio/visual effects in a tough-to-master shoot-'em-up contest. Why is it so tough? Because these are not your usual space invaders traveling monotonously downscreen. No, these birds wiggle back and forth, swoop down at you, and are generally unpredictable.

What's more, instead of dropping the usual bird stuff on your head, they come at you with no less than lethal Laser beams!

Of course, you don't just sit there and take it. You're armed with a Laser Cannon of your own with an unlimited supply of ammunition. Eliminate one wave of space fowl, and another, deadlier flock of birds swoops in to take its place.

Demon Attack is simply one of the best game cartridges of its type available today.

Those birds are real killers! Hitchcock would've been proud to make a movie about them.

OBJECTIVES

To destroy as many Demon Birds for points as possible without getting destroyed yourself.

CONTROLLERS

Demon Attack is played using the Atari joystick controller. The joystick action is surprisingly quick and responsive. Pushing the joystick to the right will move your Laser Cannon to the right. Likewise, pushing the joystick to the left will move your Laser Cannon in that direction. Pushing the action button fires your Lasers at the attacking aliens.

ELEMENTS

Laser Cannon: This is your weapon in the fight against the Demon Birds! As mentioned earlier, you can move only horizontally, not vertically. You can only fire one blast at the aliens at a time. You cannot refire your Cannon until your Laser blast either hits a Bird or travels off of the screen. Otherwise, you can fire as often as you like, because you have an unlimited Laser supply.

Keep your Laser Cannon in the center of the screen as much as possible during each attack. Demons will try to track you down and trap you in a corner if you're not careful. Also, you should pass under and fire at an alien in the same direction it is moving. This way, you will not be moving into its line of fire, you will be moving *away* from it.

You begin each *Demon Attack* game with a total of four Laser Cannon lives. You lose a life when you are either hit by a Demon's Lasers, or when a Demon dives and crashes into you. Each attack wave you survive completely unscathed (where you do not lose a life) earns you an additional Laser Cannon life. You may have a maximum of only six Laser Cannons in reserve at any time.

Demons: These are the birds that are after your hide. They'll stop at nothing to destroy you. Eliminate one, and another Bird will swoop in to take its place. Knock off an entire wave, and another, more deadly flock of aliens descend.

In each wave, there are three rows of Demon Birds: bottom, middle, and top. Through the first four waves, there will be only one Bird in each row. In every wave, only the Bird (or Birds in later waves) in the bottom row can fire at you. Blow up a Demon, and it is automatically replaced by another.

In early waves, the Demon Birds are larger and move slower than in later waves. Also, their Lasers are slowly falling bullets. In later waves the Birds fire quick, wide killer beams. They may also split into two small, fast-moving birds who will break from formation and dive at you. Other Demons will dive at you from the onset of the wave.

Demons in waves one and two are worth ten points each when destroyed. Point values increase with alternating odd-numbered waves. The maximum number of points you may receive per Demon Bird killed, in Waves 11 and beyond, are: 35 points per Demon; 70 points per split Demon; and 140 points per Diving Demon.

VARIATIONS

Demon Attack features ten game variations for one and two players. Game selections determine the difficulty of the game (Basic or Advanced) and whether or not your Laser Cannon is equipped with Tracer Shots.

We like Advanced *Demon Attack* games, without Tracer Shots. As will be discussed later, we feel Tracer Shots are a gimmick that can cause you more harm than good unless you're extra-careful.

Two-player games can either be played competitively against each other or as special "co-op" games. In these co-op games, you and your opponent operate the same Laser Cannon, but control of this cannon alternates from player-to-player every four seconds. Separate scores are totaled; if you are hit, your opponent scores 500 bonus points. This is a wild and wooly contest. Co-op games allow both players to get involved in the action at the same time, which few of these games do.

Difficulty switches determine the Demons' aggressiveness. The "B" setting will give you a basic Demon attack; the "A" setting will make them more aggressive. Beginning players will, of course, want to choose the easier of the two. If, however, you're more experienced, go for the "A" setting and be prepared for anything!

STRATEGIES

First we'll discuss some basic, overall *Demon Attack* strategies. Then we'll take a specific look at each of the first 12 attack waves.

Keep your Laser Cannon in the center of the screen as much as possible during each attack. Demons will try to track you down and trap you in a corner if you're not careful. Also, you should pass under and fire at an alien in the same direction it is moving. This way, you will not be moving into its line of fire, you will be moving *away* from it.

Because only the lowest Demon in an attack wave can fire at you — and is thus harder to destroy — you should go for as many Birds in the upper two levels as you can. Be sure to stay away from the bottom Demon's Lasers. This way, you might only have to confront the bottom Demon once or twice per wave.

Also, when two or three Demons are lined up on top of one another, keep the action button depressed. As soon as the first Bird is destroyed, a second shot will fire, and so forth. With practice, you can use this strategy to knock off an entire wave of Demon Birds without moving.

In certain *Demon Attack* game variations, your Laser Cannon is equipped with special Tracer Shots. You can guide these missiles anywhere on the screen after you fire at the aliens. This is accomplished by maneuvering the blasts with your joystick (you'll also be moving your cannon at the same time). This, however, can be a dangerous option to use. While it theoretically makes tracking the Demon Birds easier, you'll often find yourself so busy guiding your missiles across the screen that you'll walk right into a Demon's Lasers. Thus, we recommend this feature only for advanced players. Even then, it should not be put in use for every shot.

Waves 1-4: The difference in the first four attack waves is twofold: increasing speed and more deadly Laser fire. For example, in the first wave, illustrated in **Figure 1**, the Demons' Laser fire is just a single bullet. However, in the second wave, it's two bullets; by the third wave the Lasers fire in a straight line that's impossible to pass through (see **Figure 2**).

Remember to duck back and forth quickly under the bottom-row Demons to avoid their fire, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.
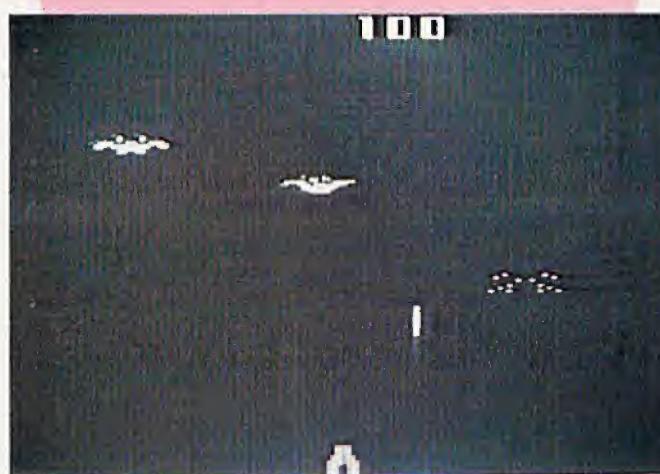
Figure 1
Wave 1: Not much going on here — you can easily clear the skies of Demon Birds.
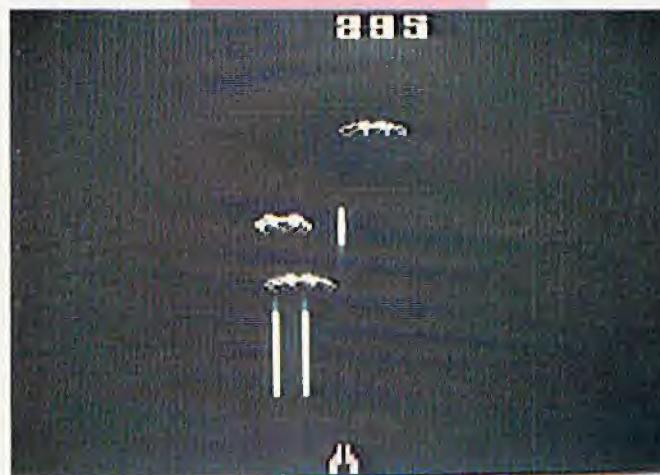
Figure 2
Wave 3: The Demons' fire in a straight line — you cannot pass through it.

When you destroy a Demon Bird in Waves 1 through 4, you should attempt to anticipate where its replacement will show up. Position your Cannon beneath that spot, and fire. If you've anticipated correctly, you will blast a Bird, sometimes before the target has appeared (you'll nail it in midentry). Since this doesn't waste any time or energy, it is worth the percentage of lucky shots that will kill a Demon as it appears on the screen. These are the only waves that are slow enough to allow you this maneuver, however.

There are a total of seven Demons in each of the first four waves.

1800
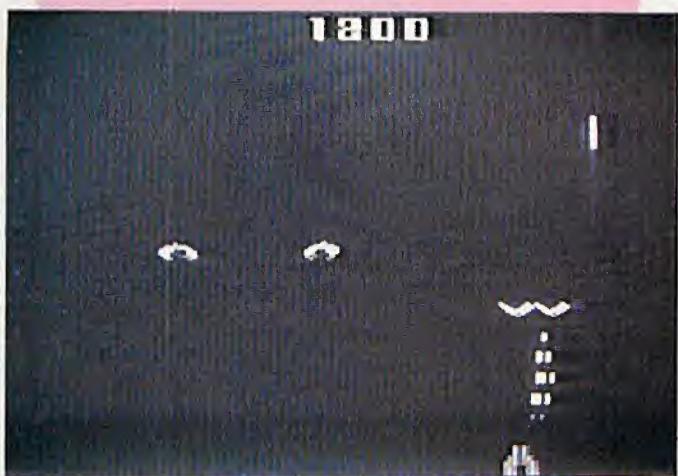
Figure 3
Pass under the Demons in the opposite direction from which they are moving. This way, you will not run into their fire; you'll run away from it.

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Figure 4
Wave 5: Hit one Demon, and it splits into two, smaller Birds.

Waves 5-10: Beginning with the fifth attack wave, things really begin to heat up. First off, the Demons are much more aggressive from here on. Secondly, when they're hit, they don't disappear, they split into two smaller birds (see **Figure 4**). Each wave from here on will consist of 24 different targets.

When a Demon Bird in the bottom row is split, one of them will continue to fire at you. However, this fire is less troublesome than that of an unsplit Demon. Once you split a Bird, concentrate your fire on the one Demon that does not shoot at you. Whenever you hit a smaller Demon, its mate will dive and head for the bottom of the screen. Hitting the "safer" of the two will get rid of the more deadly one in this manner. You can easily dodge a diving Demon.

However, beware — the bottom pair of split Demons will keep crossing their paths. It may be difficult to tell which is the deadly one and which one is harmless until you're fired upon. By then, it may be too late.

Through Wave 9, the Demons' Lasers increase in size. Eventually, they become as wide as the Demon itself and as quick as a shotgun blast. You must avoid these Lasers at all cost!

With Wave 10, however, these super-Lasers begin to drift along toward your Laser Cannon, rather than falling off the screen. Don't take your eyes off of them for a second. Dodge them as long as you can and quickly fire when you get a brief chance.

Waves 11 and Beyond: Okay, have you got all that? Good, because Wave 11 is probably going to do you in! From now on, the initial unsplit Demons are initially smaller than the resulting split Birds. They also fire straight lines of Lasers at an almost unavoidable speed. You're on your own from here on. No pattern will be able to help you now. The Demon Birds' projectiles will be firing at such sheer velocity that all you can do is dodge, fire, and hope for the best.

Too bad there's no pause button to take a break before tackling Wave 12.
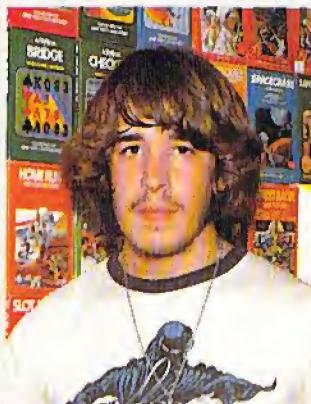
TESTIMONIAL
"I try to blow the Demons away as fast as possible.

"Fire at the lowest split Demons first, then you'll be able to concentrate on the Birds in the upper levels when they swoop down at you.

"Keep on firing. Don't hesitate and you'll clear the screen."

Todd Rodgers, age 18
Bridgeview, Illinois

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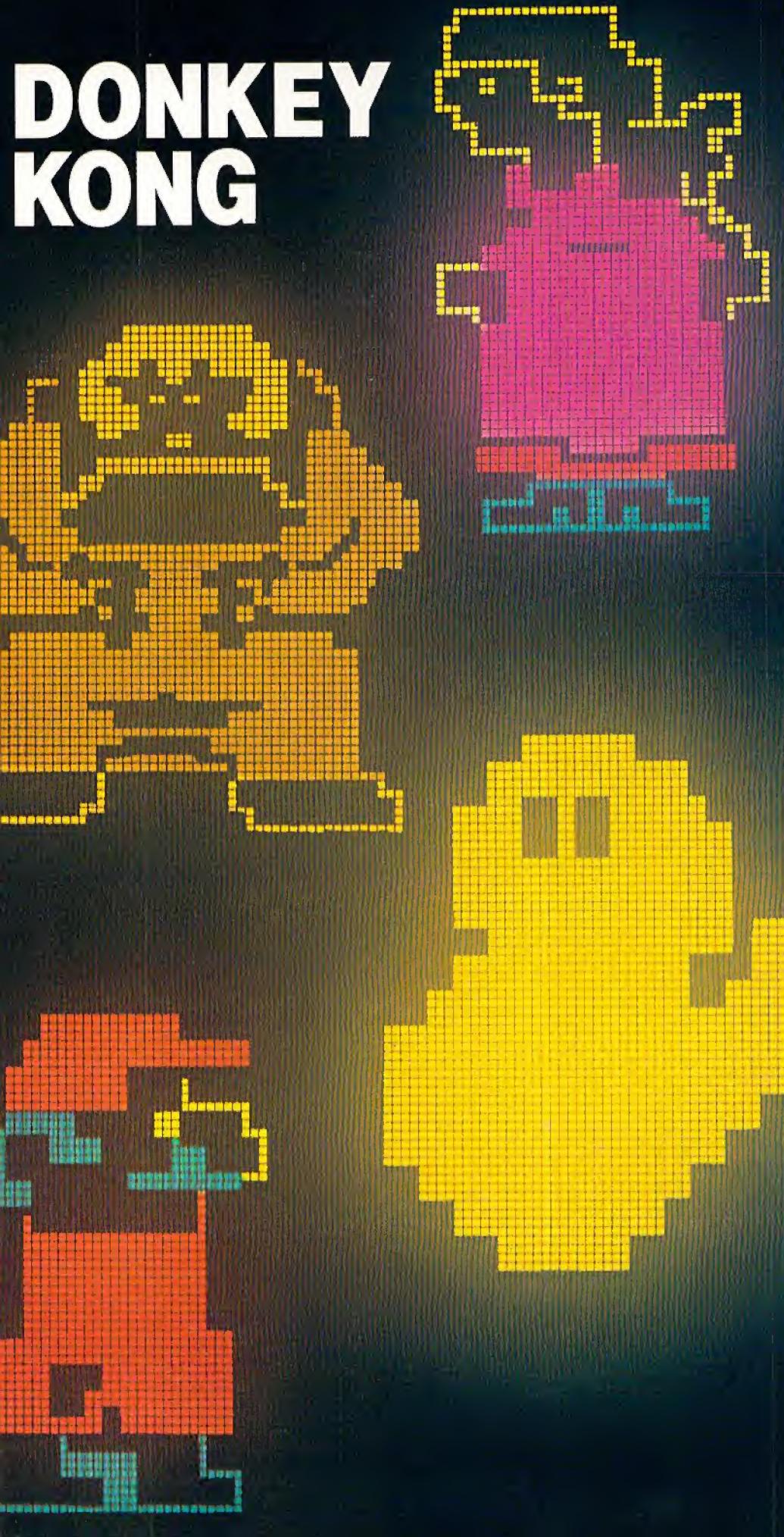
DONKEY KONG

Chivalry is not dead, it lives on in video games!

Here's Mario, the brave little carpenter who has won the hearts — and quarters — of millions since Nintendo of America released the original version of *Donkey Kong* in 1981. In Coleco's home adaptation of this arcade classic, Mario's major concern in life is still to rescue his pretty (yet unnamed) girlfriend from the clutches of the great ape, Kong.

As with the original, Mario must contend with rolling Barrels, Ladders, Beams, Rivets, Fireballs, Elevators, and, of course, Kong himself. By the way, the word "Donkey" in *Donkey Kong* is neither a misspelled "monkey," nor a reference to another animal. It's an English translation of the Japanese word for "stupid."

Coleco certainly wasn't stupid when they designed their ColecoVision version of this game (they also make *Donkey Kong* cartridges for the Atari VCS and Mattel Intellivision, but they're not as detailed and complex). The ColecoVision *Donkey Kong* is simply the best home/arcade game available today. The high-resolution graphics are terrific, the game plays much like the original, and the sound effects even include the happy tune that greets you with each turn.

What's more, you get to be the hero and save the Girl. Ah, chivalry . . . .

Coleco Industries, Inc.

for ColecoVision (included with ColecoVision basic unit)

1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 10
Game Play: 10
Longevity: 10

OBJECTIVES

To save Mario's Girlfriend and collect as many points as possible by: a) jumping over and/or smashing Barrels; b) removing Rivets; c) jumping over and/or smashing Fireballs; d) grabbing Prizes; and e) collecting bonus points upon completion of each screen.

CONTROLLERS

Donkey Kong is played using the ColecoVision controller. Pushing the joystick to the right or left will cause Mario to move in that direction. Pushing the joystick up or down will make Mario climb up or down Ladders. Pressing the left action button will make Mario jump. The joystick action is often frustratingly slow in *Donkey Kong*. The stubby controller doesn't help much, either. The joystick is too stiff to do a good job of maneuvering it entirely with your thumb, and yet it is too short to be able to effectively grab onto it. As with everything else, practice makes perfect.

ELEMENTS

Mario: This is you — the hero. Initially spend your time learning how to maneuver Mario around the screen. Don't worry about your score just yet. Learn how to climb Ladders and jumb Barrels and Fireballs with ease. Once you learn these basics, the real strategy begins.

Donkey Kong: This big gorilla is always at the top of a girder pattern. In the first screen he throws Barrels at you. Don't worry about him, though (just don't go near him or you're dead), just worry about those Barrels.

Mario's Girlfriend: Although the object of the game is to reach her, you never will. Every time you come close, Kong transports her to another level of girders.

Ladder: It is essential to climb Ladders to reach the top of a screen. You cannot jump on or off of a Ladder. You must completely climb a Ladder before you can proceed. You can't completely climb up or down broken Ladders, but you can use them to duck out of the way of a Barrel in certain emergency circumstances. Whatever you do, don't stand under a Ladder — your enemies will find you and attack.

Hammer: Hammers appear on the Ramps and Rivets screens (two on each screen). Practice using them — they're the only way to smash Barrels and Fireballs for both points and survival. You must jump straight up to grab a Hammer. You will be able to use the Hammer for about 11 seconds (you'll hear a heroic tune while using it). Don't move when using the Hammer — let your enemies run into you. This way, you'll be more prepared to jump over them should the Hammer disappear at the last second.

Barrels: Barrels can usually be found rolling down Ramps. At times, however, they will turn on their sides and plummet down Ladders (either solid or broken Ladders). You can either jump over rolling Barrels or smash them with a Hammer. Barrels are worth 100 points when jumped; 300 points when smashed.

Fireballs: These fast-moving flames appear in the Rivets and Elevators screens. They always originate from the right and left-hand sides of the second girder level, and on three levels in the Elevators screen. Avoid them — they can move faster than Mario can. Fireballs cannot, however, cross an unplugged rivet gap. You can either jump over or smash them with a Hammer. Fireballs are worth 100 points when jumped; 300 points when smashed.

Ramps: You can run up or down the Ramps; Barrels, however always roll down.

Rivets: You must unplug all six of these to clear the Rivets screen. Walk or jump over a Rivet to clear it. Once cleared, you must jump over the gap it creates. Eliminating a Rivet is worth 100 points.

Elevators: These move at a constant speed, up and down. Jump onto an "Up" Elevator when it's just below you; jump on a "Down" Elevator when it's just above you.

Prizes: The lady's Purse, Hat, and Umbrella appear on the Rivets and Elevators screens. They will earn you bonus points if you collect them (walk over them). Don't go out of your way to get them, however — you'll lose time and run the risk of getting burned by a Fireball. Grabbing a prize is worth 300 points.

Bonus: This appears at the upper left-hand corner of the screen. The Bonus indicator serves two purposes. It: a) gives you extra points when you clear a screen and b) serves as a time clock. The Bonus will count down progressively as you attempt to clear a screen. You collect whatever is left of the Bonus when you clear the screen. If it counts down to zero, you lose a life.

VARIATIONS

Donkey Kong contains eight variations — four one-player games and four two-player games. Games 1 and 5 allow you five Marios; Games 2 through 4 and 6 through 8 feature only three Marios. Also, the speed of the game elements increases in these three-Mario contests, with Games 4 and 8 being the fastest. However, this variation in speed is only slight. Outside of the number of Marios, we found no significant differences between Games 1 and 4.

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STRATEGIES

Screen One: Our pattern for Screen One is illustrated in **Figure 1**. As the game begins, keep the joystick pressed to the right so that Mario will take off as soon as possible. This will give him time to climb the far right Ladder to the second Ramp with no problem. At this point, it is not worth grabbing the Hammer.

Pause under the first Hammer if you need to, but make sure you jump the first Barrel. Mario will land on the base of the Ladder in the middle and should ascend to the third Ramp. At this point, he may either ascend the first Ladder he comes to, if there is time, or he may hide behind (to the right) of the Ladder and wait to see where the Barrel will go. If the Barrel comes down that Ladder, wait until it is out of the way, then ascend. If the Barrel goes down the Broken Ladder, begin to ascend immediately to the fourth Ramp.

Now you are at a critical point, and the only tough one of the game. Big, bad Kong flings Barrels at you with certain pauses between them, some being longer than others. Wait on the fourth Ramp for a longish pause. Time your jump over the last Barrel released, so that Mario lands on the Ladder and immediately climbs it. You should be ready to jump an oncoming Barrel if necessary. From here on, it is easy to the top.

Screen Two: This board is fairly easy, compared to what's coming! Our pattern for Screen Two is illustrated in **Figure 2**. Head directly for the Purse and the Hat, crossing the first Rivet. Here you have an option: At point "A," you can either turn around and jump the space you just created to get to the next level and pick up the pattern, or you can jump one of the Fireballs. If no Fireball appears on the second tier, just follow the pattern. At point "B," you have the option of grabbing the Hammer. Do so only if there are two Fireballs coming in a row that will be impossible to jump over. Otherwise, you'll be wasting valuable time.

If you do grab the Hammer, remember this: It will be effective as long as the musical tune plays. The tune will play four-and-one-half times. Just before that final half-a-time, run across the left-hand Rivet and hold the joystick in the up position. You'll be ready to begin climbing the Ladder as soon as the Hammer disappears.

Screen Three: This is a toughie! See **Figure 3** for our Elevator pattern. Don't try jumping on the "up" Elevator from Mario's starting position. Climb up one girder instead. To get a jump on things, hold your joystick north, and just slightly west and Mario will begin climbing as soon as he can. Then, when the top of a rising girder is even with the bottom of the girder on which Mario stands, simultaneously run
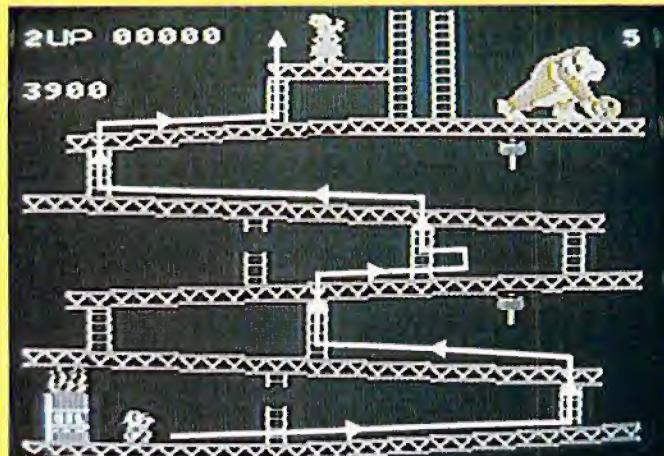

Figure 1
Pattern for Screen One: Be sure to clear those Barrels!
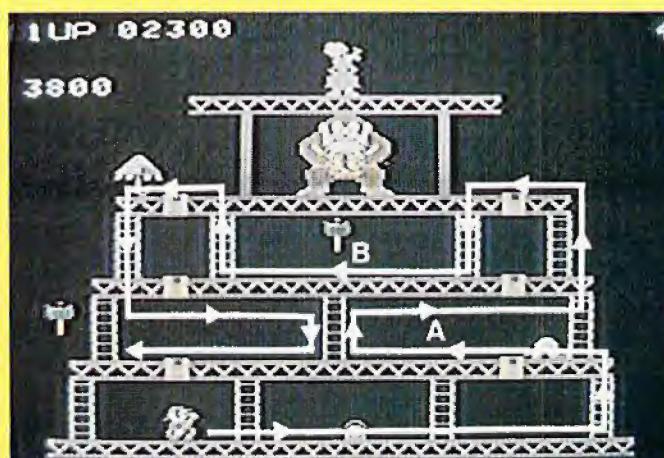

Figure 2
Pattern for Screen Two: Remember, Fireballs cannot cross Rivet Gaps, but Mario can.
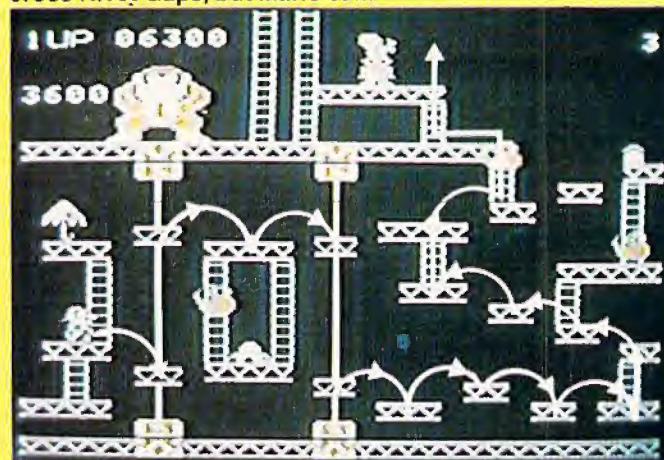
Figure 3
Pattern for Screen Three: Wait to jump to the first Elevator until the Fireball is just about to descend the Ladder.
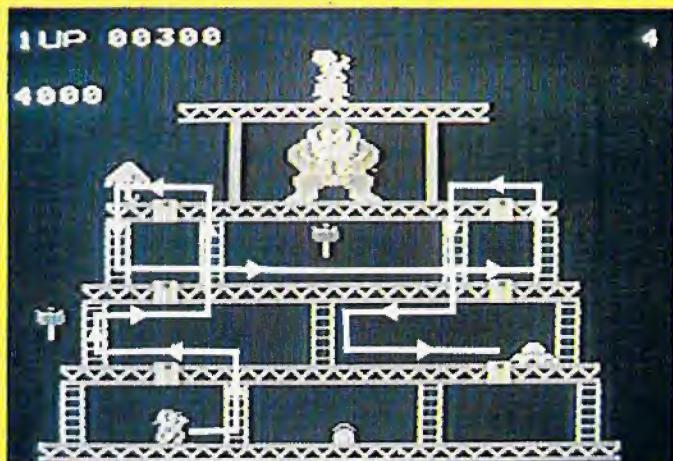
Figure 4
Pattern for Screen Four: Back to the Rivets screen and more Fireballs.
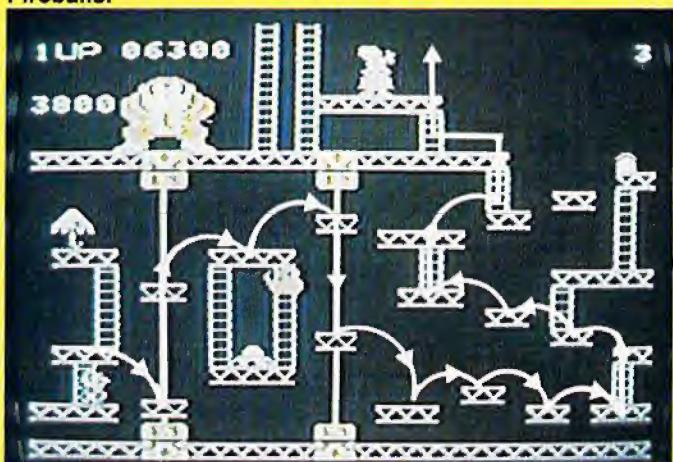

Figure 5
Pattern for Screen Five: Elevators again. After this screen, it's back to Ramps, and the five-screen sequence begins anew.

right and jump. Keep your eye on the Fireball in the box of girders and Ladders to the right. If he is on the way down, forget the Umbrella and jump to the top of the girder on the box when the top on the rising girder is even with the bottom of the girder you want to jump to.

However, if the Fireball is waiting there to grab you, jump off the Elevator to the left and grab the Um-brella, climb down the Ladder leading to the plat-form where you caught the Elevator, and catch the next one. Time the next jump so that the Fireball is on his way down the Ladder.

Now, as soon as you get to the top girder of the box with the Fireball, time a jump off the right side to catch a "down" Elevator. Ignore the Hat in the box as it will cost you too much time. Do not hop off the down Elevator at the first section of girders, but go all the way down to the iso-lated girder. Then hop to the next isolated girder. But at this point, notice that the next girder is also a short one, and that if you leap from the end of the pre-vious one you will overshoot it. Back up on the second isolated girder and jump from the middle of it. Then hop over to the Lad-der, climb it, and if the Fireball is not on the bottom of the next section, jump to it immediately. If the Fire-ball is there, and will not leave, pretend to go down the Ladder, then quickly ascend and make your move.

Now, hop like a rabbit to the next Ladder, hardly stopping on each section of girder. Climb this Ladder only if you will then imme-diately be able to hop to the next Ladder. If the Fire-ball is at the bottom of that Ladder, wait at the bot-tom of the previous one until he moves out of position. If the Fireball then comes to attack you, leap up to the right and grab the Purse. Or stand on the isolated girder until the Fireball on your left is on the ape's level. If the Fireball goes up to the girl, go past the Ladder and stand by the next one. You can't climb it, but when the Fireball comes down, you can ei-ther jump him if he attacks or easily climb the short Ladder if he doesn't.

Screen Four: Now you are at Screen Four, which is another Rivets board, only slightly harder to master. Our pattern is pictured in **Figure 4**. Ig-nore the Purse and climb the first Ladder on your right. You might have to use a fake-out maneuver at the top of the Ladder to separate two Fireballs that seem to be riding on top of one another. Then head left and jump the Fireball if one is there. Using an "S" pattern, climb right to the top, grab the Umbrella, cross the top Rivet, de-scend the Ladder, and grab the Hammer if you're sur-rounded by Fireballs. If you're not, go right for the top right Rivet. If you grabbed the Hammer, make sure to cross the mid-dle right Rivet just before the tune ends and position yourself to climb the Lad-der immediately.

Sometimes you will be able to descend and grab the Hat for bonus points before crossing your last Rivet; take advantage of those rare opportunities.

Screen Five and Beyond: Screen Five uses the same pattern as Screen Three; you just have to use more caution and move faster to avoid the Fireballs. See **Figure 5**.

TESTIMONIAL
"I have always ignored the Hammers. You only get 100 points per Barrel or Fireball you hit with them. Meanwhile, your bonus score for reaching the top decreases at the rate of about 100 points per sec-ond or two.

"I use Hammers only as defensive weapons when I'm stuck for a moment."

Phil Wiswell, age 29
Cross River, New York

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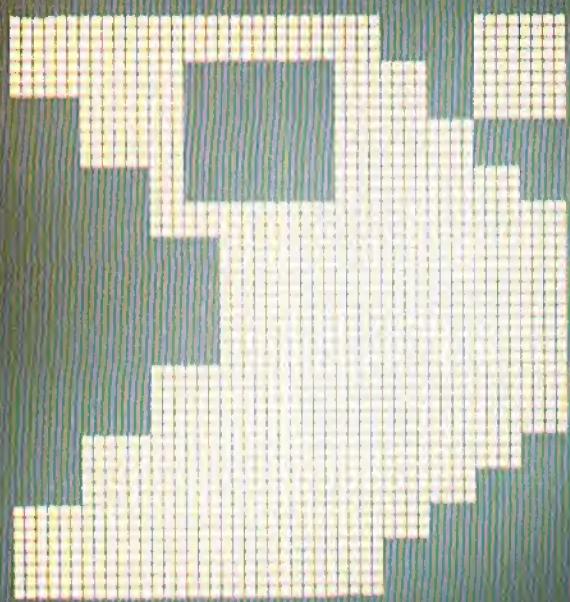
K.C. MUNCHKIN

See, there's this home-video game featuring a little, round-faced thing. This guy runs around a maze eating dots while being chased by a group of brightly colored pursuers. Pac-Man, right?

Wrong, it's K.C. Munchkin. If you thought it sounded like Pac-Man, you're not alone — so did Atari, Inc., who holds the exclusive home-video rights to the original yellow chomper. To make a long legal battle short, Atari successfully sued K.C.'s creators, North American Philips Corporation (N.A.P. Co.), claiming that the looks and game play of Pac-Man and K.C. Munchkin were a little too close for comfort. As of this writing, the case is on appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court, and N.A.P. Co. has stopped production on the game.

So why are we including a game in this book that is no longer being made? Two reasons: 1) You can still find it in most stores; and, 2) it's the most popular cartridge Odyssey ever developed.

In many ways it's a better game than Atari's VCS version of Pac-Man. K.C. Munchkin offers cleaner graphics, more challenging game play, many different games, and includes one outstanding feature — a unique programmable mode that allows a player to design his or her own custom mazes.

N.A.P. Co.
for Odyssey2
NA/$28.00-32.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 7

OBJECTIVES

To stay alive for as long as possible and accumulate as many points as possible in a given maze by eating Munchies and Munchers.

CONTROLLERS

K.C. Munchkin uses the Odyssey2 joystick controller (left controller only). To move K. C. through a maze, push the joystick in the direction you want him to go — up, down, left, or right. Make your joystick movements quick and precise. If you accidentally push the joystick in a diagonal direction, you never know which way he'll head. The action button is not used in *K.C. Munchkin.*

ELEMENTS

K.C. Munchkin: This is you, and boy, are you hungry! You've got a mad craving for Munchies. For a few seconds after you've eaten a flashing Munchie, you can eat the Munchers as well. You can move anywhere throughout a maze. If you exit through the escape tunnel at one end of a maze, you will automatically reenter the maze at the opposite side (this also holds true for Munchies and Munchers).

Unlike most video games, *K.C. Munchkin* gives you only one do-or-die chance at the Munchers and Munchies. Once you are eaten, a new game begins. You have no extra lives in reserve, nor can you earn bonus lives.

Munchies: These 12 dots — eight white dots and four flashing dots — move throughout the maze. As K.C. eats the Munchies, the speed of the remaining dots increases. The last remaining Munchie moves at the speed of K.C. Munchkin. You will not be able to run it down, but you can trap it in a corner.

Eating a white dot earns you one point; eating a flashing colored dot earns you three points and a chance to eat the Munchers. When K.C. eats all 12 Munchies, the maze resets, with all elements moving at a faster speed.

Note: If you save a blinking Munchie for last, the Munchers will be vulnerable to K.C. when the next screen begins. Thus, you can quickly nab all three Munchers when the screen resets if you lie in wait for them to exit from their lair. This is a tricky maneuver, but if you master it, you can increase your point totals significantly.

Munchers: The Munchers are after you, so you'd better run fast! The chase begins as they exit, one at a time, from the rotating box in the center of the maze.

The only way you can beat these three attackers is to eat a flashing Munchie. This turns the Munchers purple for a few random seconds and you can eat them for points. Watch out — when they begin to flash, they're getting ready to turn back to their original colors and pursue you again. They will flash three times before doing so. You can eat them on the first and second flashes but not after the third.

When eaten, the ghost of a munched-out Muncher automatically races back to the center of the screen. There it will recharge after a few seconds and return to the chase. Eating the first Muncher earns you five points; the second Muncher, 10 points; the third Muncher 20 points.

VARIATIONS

K.C. Munchkin features 10 maze variations. Pressing keyboard numbers "0," "1," "2," or "3" accesses one of four different mazes with varied difficulty ("0" being easiest and "3" being hardest). Pressing "4" accesses a different maze each time. Pressing "5," "6," "7," or "8" accesses invisible mazes — you can see the maze walls only when K.C. Munchkin touches

them. Pressing "9" accesses a different invisible maze each time. Pressing "P" allows the player to design his or her own maze.

Although K.C. Munchkin is essentially a one-player game, the cartridge allows the most recent high-scoring player (in a given game) to enter his or her name at the bottom of the screen using the Odyssey2 keyboard. Other players can then try to beat this person's high score.

Okay, after this is said and played, how much is *K.C. Munchkin* really like *Pac-Man?* Take a good, close look at both — you'll see they're totally different. After all, K.C. Munchkin has horns on the top of his head; Pac-Man does not.

STRATEGIES

Following are some basic patterns and strategies for Games 0-4 — the preset, visible mazes in *K.C. Munchkin*. When playing the game, the most important overall aspect to learn — through practice — is how to clear the screen of Munchies without hesitation and without letting the Munchers draw you off your path.

Game 0: This is a relatively easy, open maze. There is only one place where you can get trapped — at the bottom center.

To clear all the dots, follow the counterclockwise pattern as illustrated in **Figure 1.** Start with the upper left-hand corner. Hold off on eating your first flashing Munchie until you have lured at least one or two of the Munchers into the corner. When they're near, hit the flashing Munchie and gobble up as many Munchers as possible.

Proceed to the lower left-hand corner and clear it of Munchies. Be prepared to quickly eat any Munchers that may be close to your path. Don't go too far out of your way or they might turn color and zap you first.

After moving to and clearing out the lower right-hand corner, advance to the upper right-hand corner. Depending on the position of the dots, you may have to make a slight loop into the right escape tunnel to catch a wayward Munchie.

Leaving just one white dot, eat the final flashing Munchie at the top right-hand corner and chase the Munchers until they begin to flash. Then go for the last dot. Since you won't be able to outrun it, you must outwit it by using tunnels, going around barriers, and so on.

This pattern can be used for succeeding screens, but not without some improvisation on your part (due to the elements' increased speed). Always move in a circular direction around the screen, and do not try to cross the board diagonally.

Game 1: This game is a bit tougher, due to its four built-in traps. These traps, located in each of three corners and at the top center of the screen, can help you to trap straying Munchies. They are also occasionally effective for capturing vulnerable Munchers.

Our Game 1 pattern goes, roughly, clockwise around the screen, as illustrated in **Figure 2.** First head for the upper right-hand corner. Pause before eating a flashing Munchie to lure one or more Munchers in your direction. Gobble up both the flashing dot and the Munchers, then head for the lower right-hand corner of the board. The loop shown in the illustration may or may not be necessary, depending on the position of the Munchers.
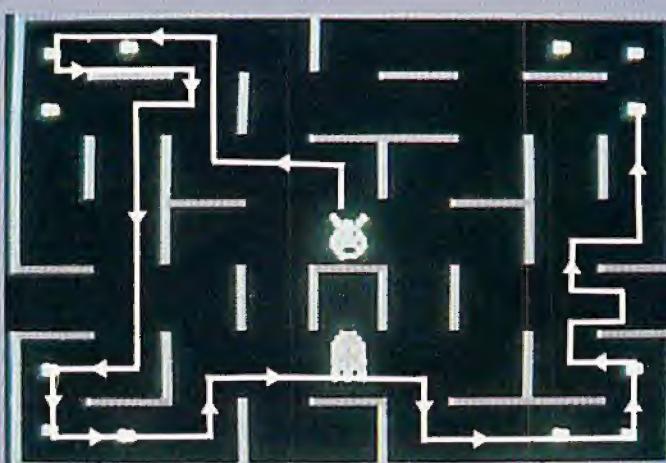
Figure 1
Game 0: Start at the upper left-hand corner and clear the screen counter-clockwise.
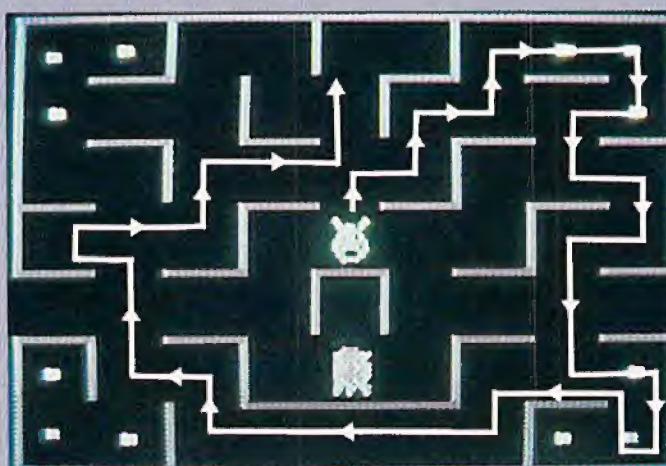
Figure 2
Game 1: Head for the upper right-hand corner and follow a clockwise pattern.

Travel across the screen to the left and clear out the Munchies in the lower left-hand corner. Again, head upward and eat one white dot — save the other two, this helps set up a strategy for trapping the last dot on the screen. The remaining white Munchie will be headed toward the trap in the upper center portion of the screen. Hesitate to

give it a chance to work its way up to this point, then eat the other two Munchies and head for the trapped dot. Don't let it get away from you.

Again, you can use this pattern in succeeding screens, but not without some improvisation and quick thinking on your part.

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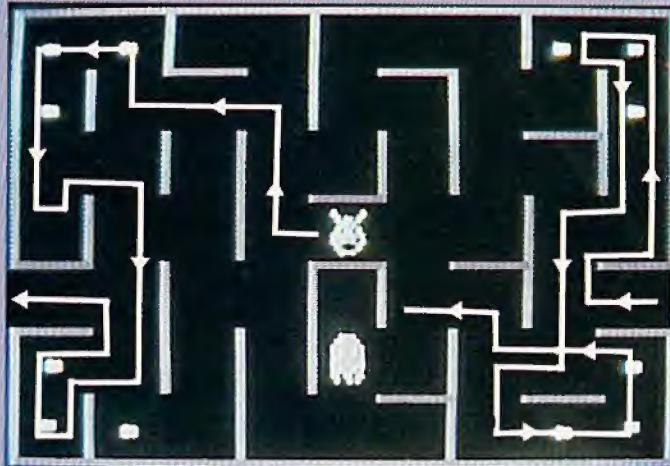
Figure 3
Game 2: Use the escape tunnel to exit from the left to the right side of the screen.
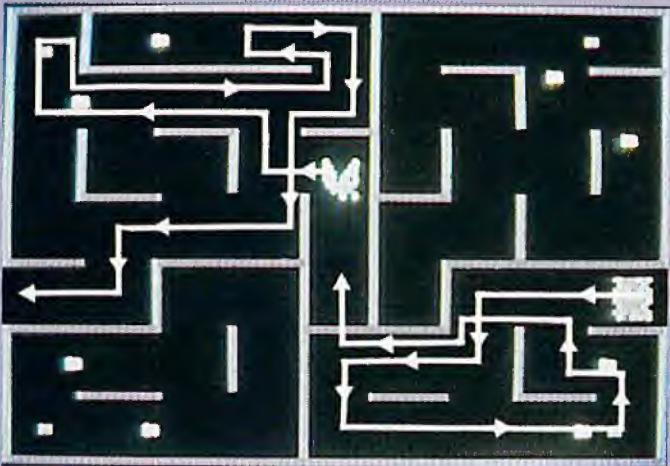
Figure 4
Game 3: The only way you can enter the upper right and lower left-hand corners is through the rotating box at the center of the maze.

Game 2: Here's where the action really begins to pick up. As illustrated in **Figure 3,** start the game by heading for the upper left-hand corner. Hesitate and one or more Munchers will follow you into the trap. Eat the flashing Munchie and as many Munchers as you can.

Quickly head to the bottom left-hand corner of the screen and go for the Munchies. If a Muncher is chasing you there, you'll be in a good position to gobble him up.

Now head out of the escape tunnel on the left side of the screen. You will enter at the right side of the board. Immediately move up to the right-hand corner and clear the section of Munchies. One white Munchie will probably have strayed from this area

—pick it up later. Quickly move down to the bottom right-hand corner and clear that area. This will leave you one white Munchie that should be traveling toward the left side of the maze. Trap it from behind a wall or in a corner.

Game 2 requires split-second timing to make this pattern work successfully for you. If you hesitate too much, you may have to alter it since the Munchies will probably have strayed from their original paths. The same holds true for successive screens in this game.

Game 3: Game 3 almost defies pattern play. As illustrated in **Figure 4** the only way you can enter the lower left and upper right-hand corners is by entering the rotating box at the center of the screen. Unfortunately, this is also where the Munchers reenter the maze after they've been eaten. This means you must play the game with more improvised strategy than in previous games.

First, take care of the upper left-hand corner. Do not head for the Munchie located in the trap until you have eaten both a flashing Munchie and your pursuers — otherwise they will get to you first. Exit via the escape tunnel at the left of the screen. Enter the lower right-hand corner and clear that area of Munchies and Munchers.

You must now wait for the Munchers to return to and then leave the rotating box before you can safely use it to enter another section of the screen. If they exit to the lower right-hand section, use the escape tunnel to move to the upper left-hand section, and approach the rotating box from there.

Enter the box and wait for it to rotate to the direction you want to go. Enter the section of the maze and clear it of all Munchies and any Munchers that occupy it. Repeat the above process for the remaining section of the maze.

There is only one feature of Game 3 that can, in any way, be considered easy. When there is only one Munchie left on the screen in a confined area, it is a snap to capture it because it has only a limited area in which to travel.

TESTIMONIAL
"Don't go for all the Munchies right away — the Munchers are rather tricky. Use the escape tunnels a lot. You can confuse the Munchers this way.

"I use the rotating box in the center of the screen to dodge the Munchers. It doesn't always work, so you've got to be careful.

"For really high point totals, I program my own mazes."

*Jerry Pangilinan, age 12
Ridgely, Tennessee*

PAC-MAN
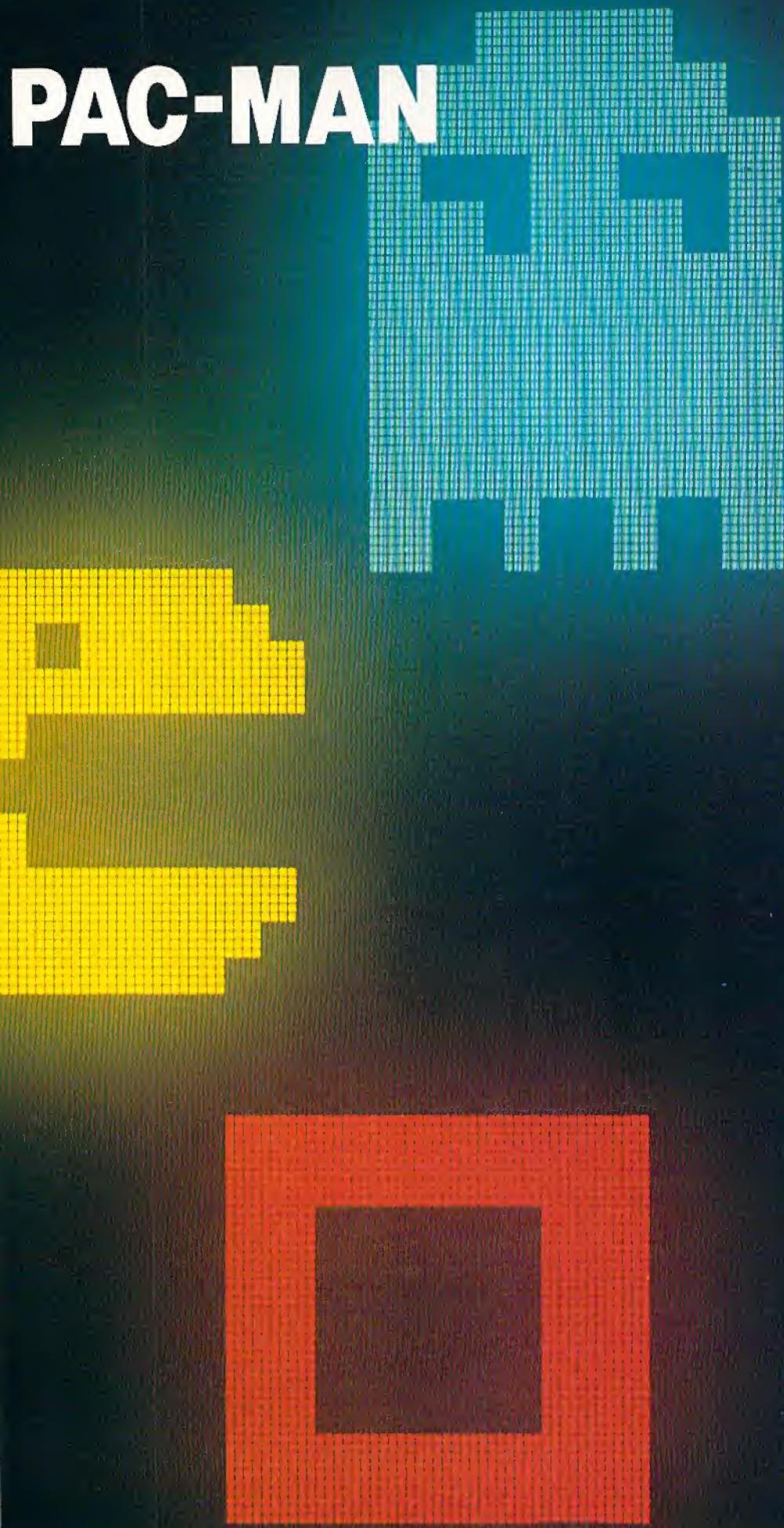
Okay, forget you've ever seen or played the original arcade version of *Pac-Man*.

Once you get that out of way, you can play — and enjoy — Atari's VCS version of the game, without getting hung up on obvious comparisons.

Yeah, we know it doesn't look and play exactly like the original. All the Ghosts are the same color and don't change much once Pac-Man eats an energized dot. You must rely primarily on your ears — not your eyes — to time your Ghost attacks.

Another problem with the home game is the joystick. With so many intricate moves through the maze, it becomes downright frustrating when the joystick doesn't respond accurately to your movements.

And then there's the maze itself. It's horizontal, rather than vertical as in the arcade *Pac-Man.*

Enough of that, though. In the end, we have a lot of fun with this game. And the reason for that concerns the actual game play. Once you begin to master all of the grid's turns and paths, you'll find Atari's game to be challenging and rewarding.

All in all, Atari's *Pac-Man* is a very good home-video game. It might even make you forget you ever saw or played the original.

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$37.95/$27.00-30.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 7

OBJECTIVES

To eat as many Video Wafers, Power Pills, and Vitamins for points as possible without being destroyed by the Ghosts.

CONTROLLERS

Pac-Man is played using the Atari joystick controller. Controller response is not as good as we'd like it to be, especially when maneuvering Pac-Man around corners. Learn the joystick's limitations well, and you'll be ahead of the game. Pac-Man can move in one of four different directions — up, down, left, or right. Pushing the joystick in one of these directions will move him in the direction you select. There are no horizontal movements in the game.

You needn't keep your hand on the joystick to keep Pac-Man moving in a particular direction. Once you've set him on a path, he will automatically continue on the route you select until he either hits a wall, is stopped by a Ghost, or you change his direction.

The action button is not used in *Pac-Man*, except to reset a new game.

ELEMENTS

Pac-Man: This is you, and you certainly need no introduction.

You begin each game near the bottom center of the maze. You have total freedom of movement throughout the maze.

You must gobble up Video Wavers, Power Pills, and Vitamins for points while you elude the Ghosts. This gives new meaning to phrase, "eat and run."

When you eat a Power Pill, the Ghosts will turn a transparent blue color, and you can eat them for extra points. You'll hear musical notes when the Ghosts are blue. When the notes stop, and the Ghosts turn pink, and then back to yellow, watch out! This means the Ghosts are back to normal and can destroy you.

You begin each game with four Pac-Men. You'll earn one bonus life each time you clear the screen of Video Wafers and Power Pills. You lose a life when you are caught by one of the Ghosts.

Ghosts: Gone are Blinky, Inky, Pinky, and Clyde, each in a different color, as in the arcade game. Instead, in the home version, you just get four yellow generic Ghosts. They're not all that easy to see, either. They're almost transparent at times. Actually, this is because, at any given split-second, there is really only one Ghost on the screen. Watch the game and blink your eyes rapidly—you'll see what we mean.

The four Ghosts begin each round of play in the chamber at the center of the screen. Once play begins, they will *always* exit on the right side of this chamber. This, of course, means that when you move your Pac-Man at the start of a screen, you should always move initially to the left.

Try not to let them trap you in the more intricate maze sections on the right- and left-hand sides of the screen. Clear those sides of Video Wafers after you've eaten a Power Pill. This way, if a Ghost is lurking in the side of the maze you're on, you can trap him in a corner, instead of vice-versa.

When energized, the first Ghost you eat is worth 20 points; the second Ghost is worth 40 points; the third is worth 80 points; and the fourth is worth 160 points. After Pac-Man eats a Ghost, the Ghost's "eyes" return to the center-screen chamber. In a few seconds, the Ghost will be "reincarnated," and will exit to attack you again. As before, the Ghost will exit from the right side of the chamber.

Video Wafers and Power Pills: There are 122 Video Wafers throughout the maze. They are worth one point each when Pac-Man eats one. Since you must fully overlap a Wafer to eat it, be sure of your movements. Sometimes you'll feel as if you've been robbed when a Wafer doesn't disappear from the screen if you've only touched it.

Power Pills are located in each of the four maze corners and are worth five points each. Of course, eating a Power Pill also allows you to go after the Ghosts for added points. Don't eat a Power Pill unless there are one or more Ghosts near you. When they're approaching you, eat the Power Pill, then take off after the blue Ghosts.

Vitamins: These orange squares appear directly beneath the Ghosts' chamber from time to time during the game. They only appear for a few seconds, then disappear, and reappear later in the game. The Vitamins are worth 100 points each when Pac-Man eats them.

Don't go too far out of your way to get the Vitamins during the game. This is especially true when a "reincarnated" Ghost is about to exit the center chamber. You'll be one deflated Pac-Man if he exits just as you gobble the Vitamin.

VARIATIONS

Pac-Man features eight game variations for one or two players and includes a children's version for younger players.

Basically, these variations determine the speeds of the Ghosts (walking, crawling, running, or jogging) and of Pac-Man (fast or slow-moving). We prefer the game featuring running Ghosts and a fast-moving Pac-Man.

The difficulty switches affect the time in which the Ghosts are vulnerable and when the vitamins appear on the screen. In the "B" position, this time frame is longer than in the "A" position. Advanced players will want to tackle the Ghosts in the "A" position (as do we).

STRATEGIES

Home *Pac-Man* can be played in one of two ways: by following an exact pattern around the maze, based on the computer's predetermined Ghost movements; or you can "bootleg" your own patterns by following your instincts, running from Ghosts, chomping down on Video Wafers, and hitting the Power Pills when the time is right.

For the easier games in the cartridge, the latter formula works just fine, if you follow some of the basic strategies we've already presented. Namely: Make your joystick movements quick and accurate; remember that the Ghosts always exit to the right of the center chamber; don't eat a Power Pill until you've lured one or more of the Ghosts into a corner; rely on the musical notes to tell you when it's safe to gobble up a Ghost for points; and so forth.

The patterns presented in this section then, are for Game 6, featuring a fast-moving Pac-Man and Ghosts at running speed. This, we feel, is the most challenging of all *Pac-Man* games and lends itself more to pattern play then do the easier contests. Though you can apply some of the general hints for this game to other *Pac-Man* variations, the patterns are strictly for Game 6.

Screen One: Begin the game by immediately moving to the left (the Ghosts exit to the right) and toward the top of the screen. Work your way around the center chamber as shown in **Figure 1,** wind your way around the maze barriers, and exit through the bottom escape tunnel.

Entering at the top of the screen, head for the Power Pill in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. You will have to hesitate, as shown, to give the Ghosts an additional second to make their way toward you. Hit the Power Pill and the surrounding Ghosts. Next, wind your way through the maze passageways to the left of center, as shown. Regardless of what game you're playing, this is the best way to clear the corridors immediately to the left and right of center.
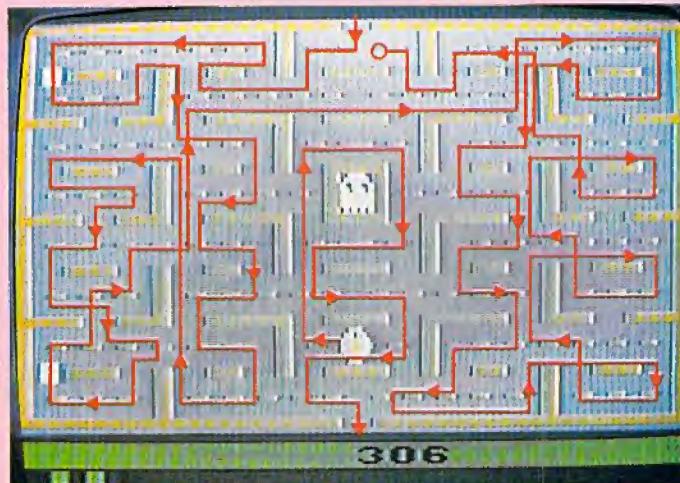
Figure 1
Screen One: Begin by circling the center chamber clockwise.
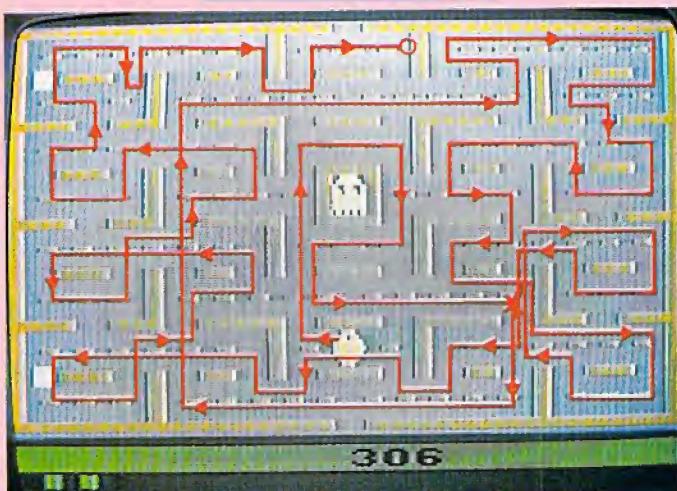
Figure 2
Screen Two: Be sure to hesitate at point "X," or a Ghost will catch up with you.

Make your way back up toward the top of the screen and take care of the Video Wafers in the corridor at the far left of the screen. Eat the Power Pill and any Ghosts in your path, and head back for the top of the screen. Next, eat the Power Pill at the upper right-hand corner of the maze, and trap Ghosts as you wind your way down the corridor to the right of center.

38

Figure 3
Screen Three: Make a wide circle around the maze before eating your first Power Pill.

Double back, eat the lower right-hand Power Pill, and clear the right corridor. Finish the screen by eating the remaining Video Wafers at the top of the screen, near the escape tunnel.

Screen Two: Again, begin the game by circling the center chamber in a clockwise direction, as shown in **Figure 2.** Hesitate at point "X" for a second. This is important — if you do not wait there briefly, you will meet up with a Ghost near the bottom exit tunnel. Work your way around the maze as shown, and eat the Power Pill in the upper right-hand corner. Go for the Ghosts in the directions we've indicated.

Next, head for the Power Pill in the lower right-hand corner, and clear out that section. Work your way to the left side of the screen, and clear out that side as indicated. Note that, this time, you're clearing both corridors on the left side at the same time.

Screen Three: Again circle the center chamber clockwise, then clear out some of the dots on the left side of the maze, as illustrated in **Figure 3.** Outrun the Ghosts and follow a wide path around the screen, as shown. Eat the Power Pill in the upper left-hand corner and the Ghosts in your path.

Next, clear out the remaining dots on the left side of the screen and head for the lower left-hand Power Pill, as shown. Cut across the screen as shown, and clear out the lower right-hand corner of Wafers and the Power Pill. Chomp-out the remaining Wafers at the bottom of the screen and head out of the lower escape tunnel.

Finally, entering from the top of the maze, eat the remaining Wafers at the top of the screen and head for the upper right-hand corner. Gobble up the Power Pill and Ghosts in your path, and eat the final Wafers on the screen.

Screen Four and Beyond: The patterns we've provided for Screen Three will be able to get you through the rest of the game. You may have to improvise somewhat if you hesitate in the wrong spot, however, so be careful.

TESTIMONIAL
"Try to get as many extra Pac-Men as possible right away. Don't go for the Ghosts in early screens — try to clear the board quickly. This way, you'll have a large back-up of Pac-Men for later mazes when the game gets harder.

"Then you can follow a pattern, go for the Ghosts, and play for points."

*Todd Rodgers, age 18
Bridgeview, Illinois*

PITFALL
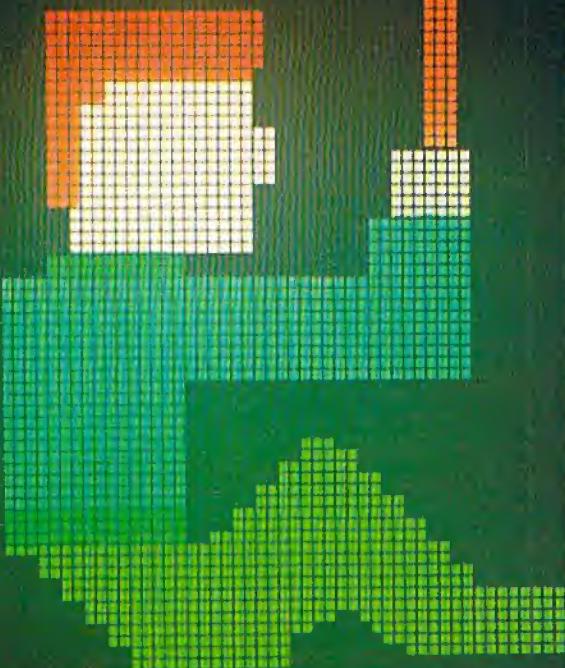
It's a jungle out there!

Subtitled, "Pitfall Harry's Jungle Adventure," *Pitfall* takes you on a dangerous adventure in search of the "Treasures of Enarc." However, the road to riches is paved with hazards. Along the way, Harry must encounter such dangerous obstacles as Cobras, Scorpions, Bogs, Lakes, and Crocodiles.

Pitfall is one of the best "quest" games available for the Atari VCS system (others include *Adventure* and *Riddle of the Sphinx*). It combines skill, strategy, and timing into a game that is always fun — and often frustrating — to play. *Pitfall* is game designer David Crane's sixth cartridge for Activision and is graphically stunning.

The essence of *Pitfall* is timing — if you haven't got it or can't develop it, stay out of the Jungle! Harry's world is made up of 255 different scenes that he may move through, one at a time, in either direction. Each screen features one or a varying combination of obstacles Harry must confront. Many contain Treasures. The screens appear in a predetermined order so, when you've played the game a bit, you can memorize their sequence.

We found 29 Treasures of Enarc in 200 screens (the manufacturer insists there are 32). Who is Enarc? Here's a clue: Try looking at the word in another way and his identity should be clear.

1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 9
Longevity: 8

OBJECTIVES

To stay alive and find as many Treasures in the Jungle as possible and accumulate as many points as possible within the 20-minute time limit.

CONTROLLERS

Pitfall uses the Atari joystick controller (left controller only). Moving Harry around the Jungle is easy. Pushing the joystick to the right or left moves him in that direction. Pushing it up or down will enable Harry to climb up or down Ladders. Pushing the action button makes him jump. Jumping is the way Harry avoids obstacles, reaches Swinging Vines, and hops across Crocodiles' heads.

ELEMENTS

Pitfall Harry: This is you, brave and strong, decked out in Jungle attire. Harry gets three lives; he can be killed by either: a) touching a Scorpion, Cobra, or Fire; b) falling into a Lake or Bog; or c) being eaten by a Crocodile.

Each scene in *Pitfall* consists of an above- and below-ground section. Only by falling into a Hole or climbing down a Ladder can Harry move from one to the other. Most of the action occurs above-ground — that's where all the Treasures (and most of the obstacles) are. Below-ground, Harry finds only Scorpions and Brick Walls. Scorpions, as it turns out, are very difficult creatures to deal with. To offset this, each below-ground scene covered equals three above-ground screens. As you will see later, the below-ground scenes can be used as shortcuts to the Treasures.

Holes and Tunnels: Harry can climb into or out of a Hole if there is a Ladder available to him. If Harry accidentally falls into a Hole, he will lose nothing more than points and a few seconds of time while he climbs out. Holes are Harry's entrance to the network of Tunnels that run under each screen. Since one underground screen is equal to three above-ground screens, Tunnels can be used as shortcuts. However, Tunnels may also lead to brick-walled dead ends. All Tunnels are guarded by deadly Scorpions.

Bogs and Lakes: Bogs and Lakes appear as either stationary or disappearing hazards.

All stationary Bogs, and many stationary Lakes (those without Crocodiles) must be crossed by Swinging Vines. Position Harry near the edge of the Hazard and press the action button when the Vine is overhead. Harry will grab the Vine and swing across the obstacle. You'll be treated to a nifty electronic "Tarzan yell." Push down on the joystick at the farthest point of his swing and Harry will land safely on the other side.

Stationary Lakes with Crocodiles, but without Swinging Vines, can only be crossed by hopping across the Crocodiles' heads when their mouths are closed (this is the most tricky maneuver in the game — more on this later). Disappearing Bogs and Lakes open and close approximately every three seconds. Your timing must be sharp to run across these areas before they reopen. If there is also a Swinging Vine overhead, use it.

Logs: Logs are the only *Pitfall* hazards that do not cost Harry a life if he runs into them — only points. To avoid losing points, Harry must jump over the Logs. They may be either just blocking the way, or rolling from right-to-left. Logs may appear individually or in groups of up to three.

Scorpions, Cobras, and Fires: If Harry touches any of these, he's a dead man! Scorpions always appear in below-ground Tunnels. Cobras and Fires always appear on the surface. To avoid these hazards, Harry must jump over them.

Treasures of Enarc: Harry need only touch a Treasure to collect its point value. A Moneybag is worth 2,000 points; Silver Bar, 3,000 points; Gold Bar, 4,000 points; and Diamond Ring, 5,000 points. A perfect score would be an (we think) impossible 114,000 points (prove us wrong).

VARIATIONS

The *Pitfall* cartridge contains only one game without variations. However, with more than 200 screens built into the game, who needs them? Difficulty switches are not used in *Pitfall*.

STRATEGIES

Although the cartridge is programmed to display more than 200 individual screens, most everything you'll encounter in *Pitfall* can be found in the first seven scenes. Let's "walk through" these screens one at a time.

Scene 1: This starting scene is of the easiest type — nothing moves except Harry. While keeping the joystick pressed to the right, you'll need only touch the action button when Harry gets close to the edge of the Hole. He'll jump right over it and continue running to the right. Jump over the Stationary Log in the same manner, as illustrated in **Figure 1.** Keep the joystick pressed to the right and enter the next scene.

Scene 2: Here you'll have to deal with three Holes, a Ladder, and two Rolling Logs. Keep the joystick to the right until Harry reaches the first Hole. Wait there until the Logs are about to run over Harry, and then jump over the Logs and the Hole at the same time. Jump over the second Hole (the Ladder is useless, it leads to a brick wall that Harry cannot get past) and stop by the edge of the third Hole. Wait for the Rolling Logs to reappear (they wrap around the screen) before jumping the third Hole (see **Figure 2**). Use the same strategy as before.

Scene 3: Now you'll have to cross a Bog by Swinging Vine and deal with two Rolling Logs that

can be trouble. Run to the edge of the Bog, wait for the Vine, and leap just before the Logs are about to hit Harry's legs. Harry is shown swinging across the Bog in **Figure 3.** Remember, if you dawdle, the Logs will reappear. Pull back on the joystick to release Harry on the other side of the Bog, jump the Logs, and proceed to the right.

Scene 4: This is your introduction to Harry's greatest nemeses: the Crocodiles. There is no way to cross a Crocodile-inhabited Lake (unless there is a Swinging Vine) without using their heads as stepping stones. Unfortunately, the Crocodiles open their mouths every three seconds. Should you land on one of their mouths when open, well, they're just wild about (the taste of) Harry! Fortunately, there is a spot at the back of the Crocodile's head where Harry can safely stand, even when the mouth is open.

There are two ways to deal with the Crocodiles. The first is the fastest and most dangerous; the second is slower but safer.

Fast/Dangerous: Time your run towards the Lake so that Harry's last footstep on land occurs as the Crocodile's mouths begin to close. Keeping the joystick pressed to the right, press the action button as you make contact with each Crocodile's head. If you time it right, Harry pogo-sticks across with four bounces. If not . . . .
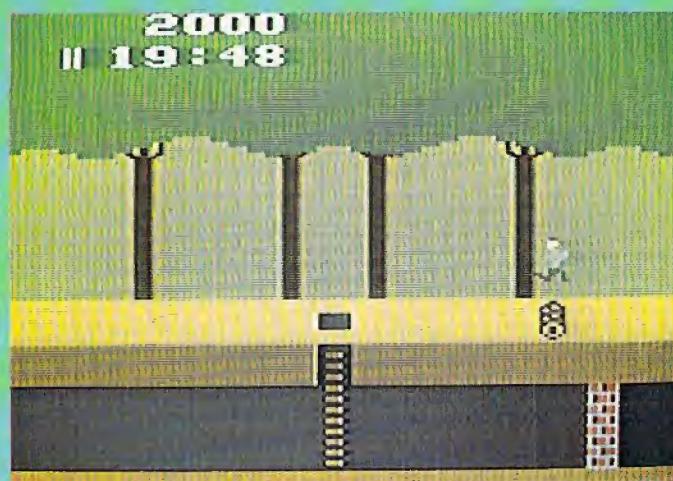

**Figure 1**
Scene One: Jumping over the Stationary Log.
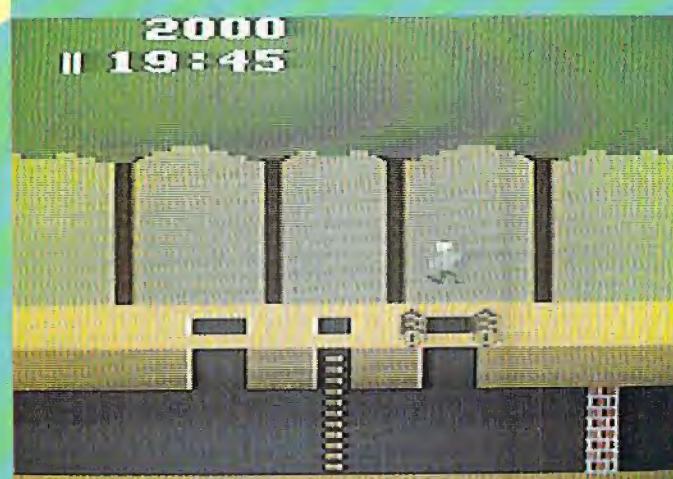
Figure 2
Scene Two: Jumping over Rolling Logs and a Hole at the same time.


Figure 3
Scene Three: Swinging across the Bog.
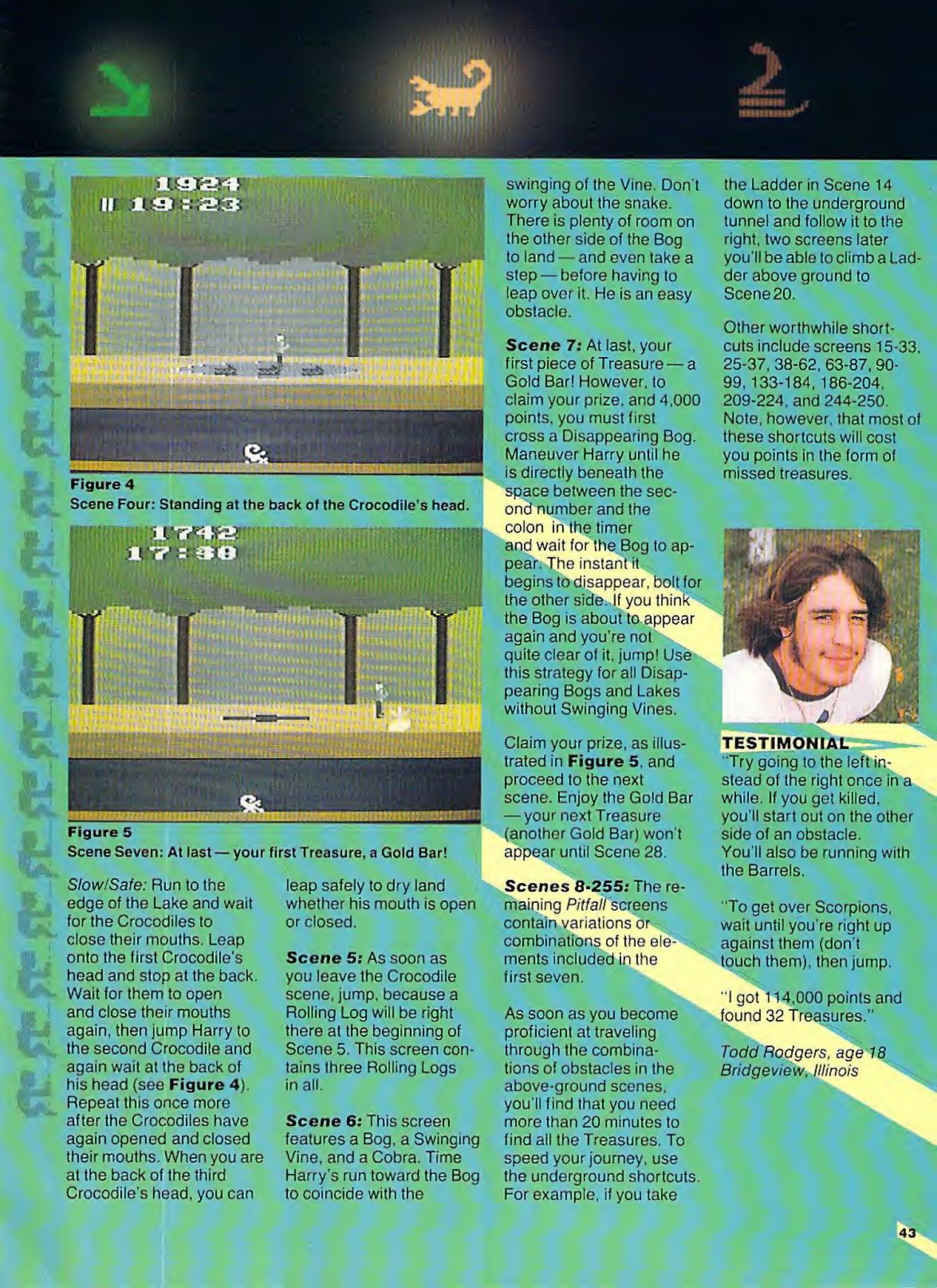
Figure 4
Scene Four: Standing at the back of the Crocodile's head.
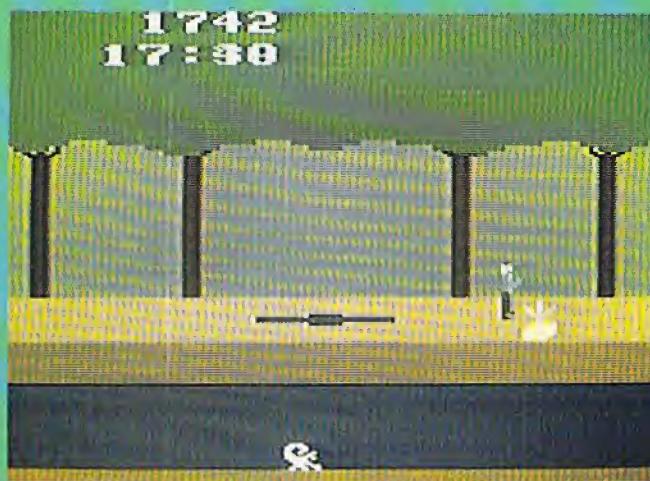
Figure 5
Scene Seven: At last — your first Treasure, a Gold Bar!

Slow/Safe: Run to the edge of the Lake and wait for the Crocodiles to close their mouths. Leap onto the first Crocodile's head and stop at the back. Wait for them to open and close their mouths again, then jump Harry to the second Crocodile and again wait at the back of his head (see **Figure 4**). Repeat this once more after the Crocodiles have again opened and closed their mouths. When you are at the back of the third Crocodile's head, you can leap safely to dry land whether his mouth is open or closed.

Scene 5: As soon as you leave the Crocodile scene, jump, because a Rolling Log will be right there at the beginning of Scene 5. This screen contains three Rolling Logs in all.

Scene 6: This screen features a Bog, a Swinging Vine, and a Cobra. Time Harry's run toward the Bog to coincide with the swinging of the Vine. Don't worry about the snake. There is plenty of room on the other side of the Bog to land — and even take a step — before having to leap over it. He is an easy obstacle.

Scene 7: At last, your first piece of Treasure — a Gold Bar! However, to claim your prize, and 4,000 points, you must first cross a Disappearing Bog. Maneuver Harry until he is directly beneath the space between the second number and the colon in the timer and wait for the Bog to appear. The instant it begins to disappear, bolt for the other side. If you think the Bog is about to appear again and you're not quite clear of it, jump! Use this strategy for all Disappearing Bogs and Lakes without Swinging Vines.

Claim your prize, as illustrated in **Figure 5**, and proceed to the next scene. Enjoy the Gold Bar — your next Treasure (another Gold Bar) won't appear until Scene 28.

Scenes 8-255: The remaining *Pitfall* screens contain variations or combinations of the elements included in the first seven.

As soon as you become proficient at traveling through the combinations of obstacles in the above-ground scenes, you'll find that you need more than 20 minutes to find all the Treasures. To speed your journey, use the underground shortcuts. For example, if you take the Ladder in Scene 14 down to the underground tunnel and follow it to the right, two screens later you'll be able to climb a Ladder above ground to Scene 20.

Other worthwhile short-cuts include screens 15-33, 25-37, 38-62, 63-87, 90-99, 133-184, 186-204, 209-224, and 244-250. Note, however, that most of these shortcuts will cost you points in the form of missed treasures.

TESTIMONIAL
"Try going to the left instead of the right once in a while. If you get killed, you'll start out on the other side of an obstacle. You'll also be running with the Barrels.

"To get over Scorpions, wait until you're right up against them (don't touch them), then jump.

"I got 114,000 points and found 32 Treasures."

*Todd Rodgers, age 18
Bridgeview, Illinois*

SPACE HAWK

Why, George Plimpton *is* right. Mattel *does* make good space games for Intellivision!

Space Hawk is one of the new Intellivision cartridges aimed at exploding the popular misconception that Mattel has no outer space games that compare with Atari's. Surely *Space Hawk* will give its fellow "blast- your-way-through-space" game, *Asteroids*, a run for its money. It offers entertaining graphics and sound effects, and its game mechanism allows a good player to continue blasting away for an hour or so.

In *Space Hawk,* you control a lonely Hunter, drifting through deep space. You're powered only by a Backpack Jet. You're armed with a special Gas Blaster and a never-ending supply of ammunition. This weapon's not just for show, either. You must blast your way through an assortment of dangers, including Gas Bubbles, Comets, and the infamous Space Hawk, himself.

Space Hawk is entertain-ing, once you become proficient at it. But, like so many of Intellivision's other games, the many different buttons and functions on its keyboard-and-disc controllers may turn off casual video-game players.

Think of Space Hawk as sort of a "hi-tech" *Asteroids*.

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$30.00-35.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 7
Game play: 6
Longevity: 6

OBJECTIVES
To destroy as many Space Hawks and other targets for points as possible without being destroyed yourself.

CONTROLLERS
Space Hawk is played using the Intellivision controllers and the keyboard overlays included with the game cartridge.

ELEMENTS
Hunter: This is you, adrift in deep space, propelled by your Backpack Jets. You are armed with a "Gas Blaster" gun and an unlimited supply of ammunition.

Thrust activates your Backpack Jets and propels you through space. The Thrust control is the bottom button on either side of the controller. You can Thrust either in "Drift," or "Direct" Mode. You begin each game in Drift Mode. When you're in this mode, your Hunter will continue to drift through space even after you take your finger off of the Thrust control.

At any time during the game, you can switch to the Direct Mode by pressing the appropriate button on the keyboard overlay. This will give you greater control over the Hunter's movement. When you take your finger off of the Thrust control, your Hunter will come to a dead stop. There is no inertial movement.

Aiming your Hunter is accomplished by using the direction disc at the bottom of the controller. The Hunter's movement can be either "Quick," or "Smooth." You begin each game in the Quick Mode. When you're in this mode, your Hunter will rotate immediately toward the direction you choose. This is indicated by pressing one of the outer edges of the disc — top, bottom, left, or right.

At any time during the game, you can switch to the Smooth Mode by pressing the appropriate button on the keyboard overlay. This will give your Hunter a slower, more gradual rotation. When you press the right half of the direction disc, your Hunter will rotate clockwise. When you press the left half of the disc, your Hunter will rotate counterclockwise.

Firing your Hunter's Gas Blaster can be accomplished in one of two ways. You can either blast your enemies in "Single Shot," or "Auto-Fire" Mode. You begin each game in Single Shot Mode. When you press the firing button, your Gas Blaster will fire one shot at a time. The firing button is the uppermost control on either side of the controller.

Again, at any time during the game, you can switch to Auto-Fire Mode. In this mode, the computer will automatically fire continuous, repeated rounds for you — all you need do is aim your Hunter. The Auto-Fire Mode is particularly useful for *Space Hawk* beginners.

You begin each game with five Hunters. Your Hunter will be killed when he touches any of his enemies. Extra Hunter lives are earned at certain plateaus: You'll earn one every 1,000 points up to 19,999; every 2,000 points between 20,000 and 49,999 points; every 3,000 points between 50,000 and 199,999 points; and every 5,000 points when you reach 200,000 points and up.

Hyperspace: You can Hyperspace your way out of trouble when you're about to be killed. Pressing the Hyperspace button on the keyboard overlay will move you instantly to another place in the galaxy far from all the targets and objects you see. Don't use Hyperspace too often, however — it will cost you points.

Space Hawks: These are your main adversaries. They are also worth the most points when killed. What's more, they're hearty creatures — it takes three direct hits to destroy one. Although they can't fire upon you, watch out. They leave equally deadly Gas Bubbles in their trail.

A smaller, more-difficult-to-destroy Space Hawk will also begin to appear after your score reaches 20,000 points.

Gas Bubbles: As the Space Hawk makes his way across the screen, he leaves a trail of killer Gas Bubbles.

Single Bubbles are just that — one small bubble that you should easily be able to take care of with your Gas Blaster. *Double-Big* Bubbles begin as small Gas Bubbles. When hit by your Hunter's fire, they split into two larger Gas Bubbles.

Rainbow Bubbles appear on the screen only when your score is over 100,000 points. They constantly change color and ricochet your Gas Blaster fire in all directions. Thus, it is possible to shoot yourself when firing at a Rainbow Bubble. The only way you can destroy a Rainbow Bubble is when it is green.

Comets: These adversaries appear on the screen only when your score is over 10,000 points. They are small and quick and should be dealt with immediately.

Amoebas: These pulsating gray blobs cannot be destroyed. They can, however, destroy your Hunter if he touches one. Small Amoebas begin to appear on the screen once you've reached 40,000 points. Larger Amoebas appear when your score is over 200,000 points.

Black Holes: Every once in a while your Hunter will encounter a Black Hole. It looks just like what it says it is — black. Although it cannot destroy you, it will send you into Hyperspace. Don't bother worrying about Black Holes. The only thing you'll lose if you enter one is points (the same number of points you lose when you Hyperspace yourself). It may, however, save your life.

VARIATIONS
Space Hawk can be played at any one of four speeds, selected before the start of each game.

STRATEGIES

Before you can do battle with the Space Hawk for big point totals, you must become proficient at thrusting, aiming, and firing your Hunter. Let's take a closer look at strategies for these specific functions.

Thrusting: As the game begins, your Hunter will be in the Drift Mode, which means he will continue traveling through space after Thrusting (like in *Asteroids*). This mode should be employed only when you are searching the cosmos for prey. When prey is found, switch to the Direct Mode to keep you from overrunning your targets. The Direct Mode gives you more precise control over your Hunter. You'll need it to out-maneuver and kill the Space Hawks.

We found ourselves playing in the Direct Mode for at least 75 percent of the game. Often, we will ignore the Drift Mode entirely.

Aiming: Initially your Hunter is in the Quick Mode. This means he will turn immediately to face any direction you indicate on the disc. The other Aiming Mode, the Smooth Mode, gives you an easier rotation (again, like in *Asteroids*). This Mode is illustrated in **Figure 1.** Players will inevitably select the mode that's right for them, but we suggest using the Quick Mode in most situations. Again, you'll have more precise control over your Hunter.

The only instance in which the Smooth Mode would be to your advantage is a situation where you are surrounded by enemies. In this case, the Smooth Mode will allow you to turn a slower circle, spreading your Gas Blaster fire in all directions.

Firing: At the onset of each *Space Hawk* contest, you will be in Single Shot Mode. Unless you're new to the game, you should stay in this Firing Mode. The alternative, Auto-Fire Mode, automatically fires shots one at a time in a continuous flow. This is good for beginners, but more advanced players will want better control over their shots.

Single Shot Mode allows you to fire two Gas Blaster missiles at a time in a straight path. For best results, line yourself up with a target that is approaching you directly. Let go with two Gas Blaster shots, and BLAM! Then move on quickly to other targets.

Note that the Gas Blaster shots get larger as they move farther away from your Hunter. This means that you can get good long-range firing results. However, your firing range is only about half the width of the screen — if your targets are any farther, you'll have to move closer to them.
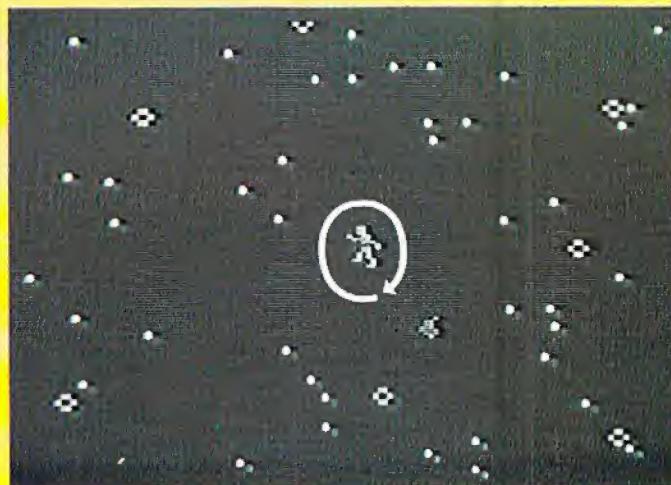
Figure 1
In Smooth Aiming Mode, your Hunter will gently rotate 360 degrees as indicated.
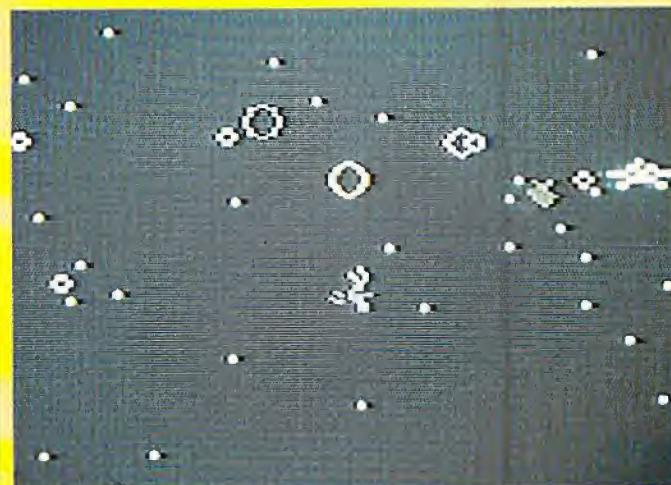
Figure 2
Beware the lethal Gas Bubbles the Space Hawk leaves behind!

Now, let's take a look at some specific ways to rid the universe of your adversaries, the Space Hawks, Gas Bubbles, Comets, and Amoebas.

Space Hawks: Space Hawks are your main quarry as they are worth the most points. They're also larger and tougher than any of your other opponents. Remember, it takes three well-placed Gas Blaster hits to cream a Space Hawk.
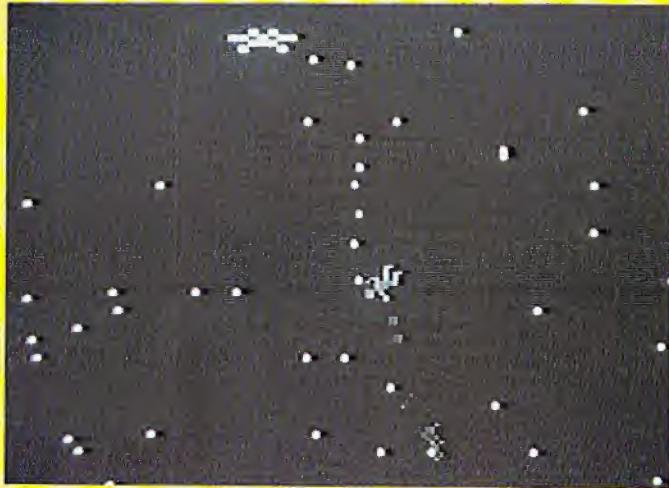
Figure 3
Keep a safe distance from the Space Hawk and fire your Gas Blasters!

Space Hawks may be mean, but they're unarmed. You can approach and shoot them from any angle. However, they leave trails of deadly Gas Bubbles in their wakes, as illustrated in Figure 2. Don't follow closely behind them, or it'll be all over.

The best strategy for annihilating Space Hawks is thus: Get in front and to one side of a Space Hawk. Lead him across the screen with your Thrusters. Maintain a safe distance and stop every few seconds to fire a couple of rounds at him (see Figure 3).

Be careful. Don't shoot a Space Hawk that is too close to you. The resulting explosion produces shrapnel that can kill your Hunter.

Gas Bubbles: Once you have eliminated a Hawk, immediately go for the Gas Bubbles it left behind. This way, you'll accumulate some additional points before the next Space Hawk appears. Bubbles appear in early stages of the game as either Single or Double-Big Bubbles. The latter must be split into two bubbles before it can be destroyed.

There is really no trick to destroying a Bubble. Just be sure you don't drift or Thrust into one of them. Simply aim and fire — they'll pop like balloons! But, again, don't get too close to them when they pop. Often a large, blue explosion will occur. Make sure you steer clear of this.

Rainbow bubbles begin to appear on the screen after you reach 100,000 points. This type of bubble is really obnoxious! Most of the time it will ricochet your shots across the screen — even right back at your Hunter. They'll change colors every few seconds. The only time they can be destroyed by your Gas Blaster is when they are green. Memorize the rotation of the colors and fire just before green comes up.

Comets: Comets do not begin appearing on the screen until you reach 10,000 points. These small, quick targets are worth more than Gas Bubbles, so they're well worth going after. Comets can be approached from any angle. We find, however, that leading them and firing from the front gets best results.

Amoebas: These indestructible enemies begin to appear after your score has reached 40,000 points. Keep a safe distance from them. If you get trapped by an Amoeba, your only alternative is to Hyperspace your way out of danger. Use it sparingly, however, because Hyperspace costs you points.

Large Amoebas, which appear after your score reaches 200,000 points, are the kind of things Hyperspace was meant for. In other situations, using it should be avoided.
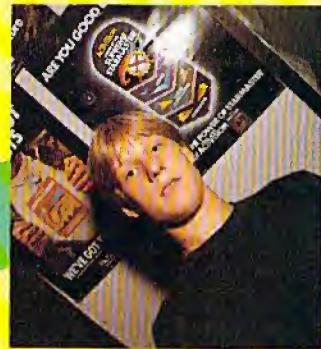

TESTIMONIAL
"I alternate through the game between drifting and flying directly. I like to keep it in Auto-Fire throughout the whole game, though.

"I like to stay still on the screen and let the Space Hawks come to me. I shoot the Space Hawks, then I go for the Space Bubbles as fast as I can."

*Mark Vecci, age 14
Bridgeview, Illinois*

Move away from the Mutants in the direction they are headed to best dodge their fire.
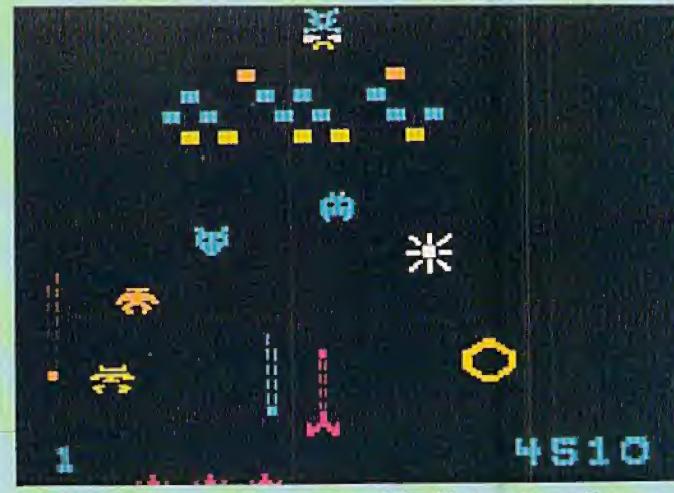
Try to shoot away at the center of the Mutant formation so you can eliminate the Mother Creature.

COMMUNIST MUTANTS FROM SPACE

Arcadia Corp.
for Atari VCS (with Arcadia Supercharger)
$14.95/NA
1 to 4 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 9
Game Play: 9
Longevity: 8

That's right — not just any old Mutants from space, but actual, card-carrying COMMUNIST MUTANTS attack in this spectacular variation on the *Space Invaders/Galaxian* video-game theme.

OBJECTIVES

In *Communist Mutants*, you must defend Earth against a swarm of deadly Marxists from outer space. The evil ruler of the planet Rooskee (get it?) has sent the diabolical Mother Creature, filled with "irradated vodka," to attack your planet and enslave its inhabitants. The Mother Creature does this by laying Eggs that hatch into these bloodthirsty Communist Mutants. Your only line of defense is an Anti-Mutant Cannon with an unlimited supply of ammunition. The Commies swoop down and fire at you until . . . well, it's no better being Red than dead! Eliminate one wave of mutant attackers and another wave appears on the screen faster than you can say "Joe Stalin!"

STRATEGIES

The single-most important maneuver to learn in Commie Mutants is how to destroy the Mother Creature. Eliminating her is the only way you'll ever be able to clear a screen.

The easiest way to do this is by using the game's Penetrating Fire option. Since Penetrating Bombs will stop at nothing on their way to the top of the screen, a few well-placed hits will usually do the job. If, on the other hand, you want a bit more challenge, use the Time Warp game option. At the beginning of a wave, immediately push the joystick forward to initiate the Time Warp. This will give you a few seconds to clear a path — in the center of the attack wave — so you can get a clear shot at the Mother Creature.

Without either of the above game options, it becomes more difficult to rid yourself of the Mother Creature, but it's still not impossible. The key, again, is to clear a path through the center of the Mutant Eggs by concentrating your fire on this area of the attack wave.

What about the Mutant Attackers diving and firing at you while all this is taking place? All you need do When defending yourself against Mutant Attackers, remember to pass under them in the direction they are traveling. In other words, if a Mutant is descending upon you right to left, you should also move right to left and fire when you are in a direct line with the Mutant. Be sure not to stop under the creature or it might shoot you first. Should you move "against the grain," you run the risk of accidentally running into a Mutant's fire. Try not to get backed into a corner.

Also, let the attackers run off of the bottom of the screen once in a while. You won't gain any points for this, but you won't lose anything either. Beware: Some Mutants will appear to head for the bottom of the screen, but will pull up at the last minute and zero in on you.

Avoid using the Guided Fire option — more often than not you will crash into a Mutant or its fire while you are trying to guide your missiles with the joystick.

48

Follow a connect-the-dots approach to tracking the Mad Bomber's projectiles.

Only one bucket left — now the game really gets difficult!

KABOOM!

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$22.95/$17.50-19.50
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

It's the world's first terrorist home-video game!

In *Kaboom!* a Mad Bomber (in black-and-white striped garb) moves back and forth at the top of your TV screen, maniacally dropping Bombs on you.

OBJECTIVES
You must catch as many of the Mad Bomber's deadly projectiles with your Water Buckets for points as possible without missing them. Initially, you are provided with three Water Buckets, stacked on top of each other. The Mad Bomber drops his weapons in waves. He starts dropping

Bombs slowly in the first wave. As he becomes more skilled in the art of lighting and pitching Bombs, his speed increases. In addition, so do the number of Bombs he drops before stopping for a break.

The Bombs in each successive wave are worth progressively more points. There are eight waves in all, starting with ten bombs in Wave 1 and increasing to 150 in Wave 8. Oh, yes, by the time you reach Wave 8, the Bombs will be dropping at a staggering 13 per second! If a Bomb hits the ground, it explodes along with all the other Bombs on the screen. At this point, the Mad Bomber giggles, and you lose one Bucket (the bottom-most one).

You then drop back to the previous level, and the next set of Bombs comes a little more slowly again.

STRATEGIES
Success at *Kaboom!* is achieved, not by trying to catch each individual Bomb, but by thinking of the screen as a "connect-the-dots" picture. Do not concentrate on any one part of the screen, but take in the whole picture. Mirror the movements of the Mad Bomber with your paddle.

Especially when the Bombs are falling fast, observe the pattern in which they are falling and move your Bucket accordingly. A smooth paddle movement works best for most of the game, though you should be prepared to make some sudden, jerky reversals at various points in the game.

The first Bomb in each new wave will be dropped from the spot the Mad Bomber ended up after the previous wave.

Don't simply move your Buckets under the Mad Bomber — especially if he is on the far edge of the screen. Move the Buckets first to the center of the screen and then position them under the Bomber. This will protect you from the inaccuracy of control near the edge of the screen.

As you pass each 1,000 points in *Kaboom!*, you get an extra Bucket. However, you can never have more than three Buckets at any one time during the game — none can be kept in reserve. Thus, you should miss the very last (or close to it) Bomb in a wave just before you reach a 1,000-point plateau. This drops the speed of the Bombs down a bit, and you'll get the lost Bucket back as soon as you go over 1,000 (or multiples thereof).

49

Doing battle with the Alien Spaceships in the Launch Trench.
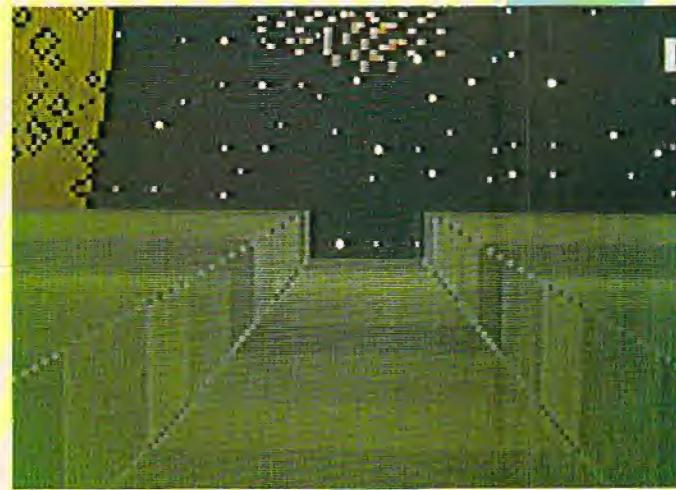
The game is over and Earth is destroyed!

STAR STRIKE

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$30.00-35.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 10
Game Play: 5
Longevity: 5

There's a lot at stake in this game. Lose it and you lose more than your life — Earth and all its inhabitants are destroyed in one climactic explosion!

Star Strike is a graphically beautiful game. The action looks similar to the concluding battle scenes in *Star Wars*. It's not particularly easy to pick up and play, but once you get the hang of it, you'll save Earth every time. We like to look at this game, but don't find there's enough to hold our attention for many repeated plays.

OBJECTIVES

You control a Spaceship, dropping bombs on, and firing lasers at a number of red "Hot Targets" that race down the center of a Launch Trench one at a time and disappear off of the bottom of the screen. Simultaneously, you must avoid and/or shoot down the Alien Spaceships that defend the Hot Targets. As the game progresses, Earth moves across the background until it is aligned with the Trench. If you haven't destroyed all of the Hot Targets, they will turn into missiles and will automatically destroy Earth.

STRATEGIES

There are only four things you can do in this game: maneuver your ship on screen, drop bombs, fire lasers, and change your flying speed. You can move your ship all over the screen, but most of the action will take place in or near the Trench. A shadow of your ship is provided to give you a better idea about altitude. Do not fly into the ground or the walls of the Trench or the game will end. Bombs fall at an incredibly slow speed in this game, and it is impossible to bomb a target from high altitudes.

Just before a target will appear on the horizon of the Trench, you'll hear a warning beep. Immediately move to the center of the Trench, and bring your ship down until it almost touches the ground (experiment until you find out exactly how low you can fly). Then release a Bomb when the target is about an inch in front of your ship. There is a second advantage to bombing from a low altitude other than accuracy: Your Lasers will not fire while a Bomb is falling, so you won't be able to defend your ship at a high altitude from enemy Fighters.

You can only destroy the enemy Fighters once they are in front of you. The Fighters always come in pairs and start behind you so you'll have to do some maneuvering to avoid their Laser fire. Move to a high altitude rather than to a side of the screen and dodge the Fighters toward the top of the screen. Then, as soon as you hear the warning beep of an approaching target, drop down into positon.

No matter where you are, your Laser fire heads toward a "vanishing point" in the center of the screen ahead of your ship. Thus, you shouldn't fire at the Fighters unless they are in front of you and lined up with the vanishing point.
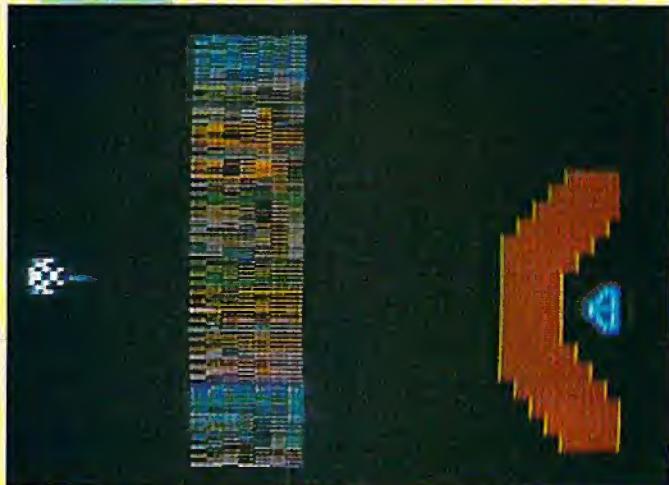
The Qotile is protected by a massive Shield. Shoot or eat your way through it, and he'll be vulnerable to the Zorlon Cannon.
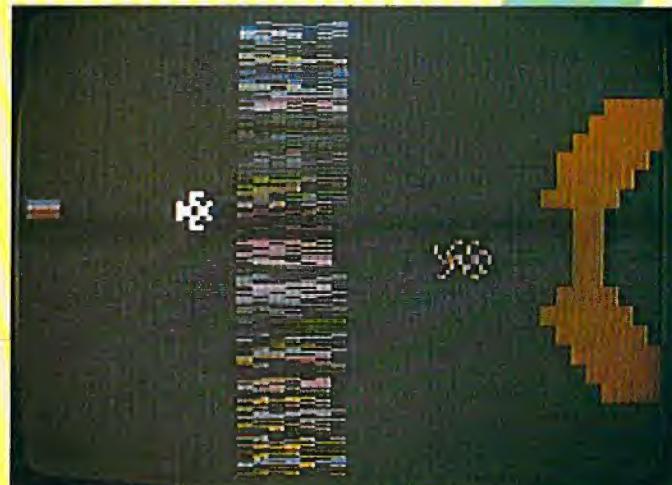
Wait near the Neutral Zone until the Swirl takes off; then fire the Cannon and nail it in mid-flight.

YARS' REVENGE

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$24.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 5

Here's a home-video game that features (are you ready for this?) outer space mutant houseflies! No, you don't Raid them with a SWAT team — they're the good guys for a change! In Atari's colorful, imaginative *Yars' Revenge*, intergalactic insects must protect their planet from destruction by ruthless alien invaders.

OBJECTIVES
You control a Yar (the housefly) who must either shoot or devour a path through a durable Shield and destroy the evil Qotile with a blast from the mighty Zorlon Cannon.

Throughout the contest, you also barely avoid the Qotile's guided Destroyer Missile. You can hide from it in the colorful Neutral Zone, but you cannot fire either your Energy Missiles or the Zorlon Cannon while positioned there. Occasionally, the Qotile will turn into a pinwheel-like Swirl that will attack you with lightning speed. You can, however, destroy a Swirl with the Zorlon Cannon.

STRATEGIES
First thing you'll have to do in *Yars' Revenge* is dodge the pesky Destroyer Missile. The best way to accomplish this is to keep yourself near the Neutral Zone, and fire away at the Shield. When the Destroyer Missile nears, duck into the Neutral Zone (where it cannot harm you), and it will follow you in. Then quickly fly up to the Shield and eat away at it until the De-

stroyer Missile again nears you. Then repeat the above maneuvers until you either get a clear shot at the Qotile or it turns into a Swirl (more on this later). When eating away at a Shield, be careful not to "bounce" into the Destroyer Missile — move away from it, not toward it, as you chomp. Although the object of *Yars' Revenge* is to destroy the Qotile (which is easy enough — blast a hole through the Shield and time your Zorlon Cannon fire to hit it as the Shield zig-zags up and down the screen), you can rack up big scores and earn extra lives by hitting the Swirls in midflight.

After summoning up the Zorlon Cannon, lie back in a safe spot — the Neutral Zone — and wait for the Swirl to appear. When it does, duck out of the Neutral Zone and fire just as the Swirl takes off. Be pre-

pared to move out of the way quickly, otherwise you'll be creamed by the Swirl and/or Zorlon Cannon fire. This takes some practice, but when you've mastered this technique you'll score in the hundreds of thousands every time.

When you destroy either a Swirl or Qotile, you'll be entertained by a colorful screen graphic. Hidden amid the patchwork of colors (in a randomly selected position) is a spot called the "Ghost of Yars." This is a programming peculiarity that, when you hit it, will automatically end the game and blackout the screen (except for the letters "HSW," the initials of game programmer Howard Warshaw). Thus we recommend you keep the Yar off the color graphics when they appear and confine your "victory flight" to safer areas of the screen.

SPACE
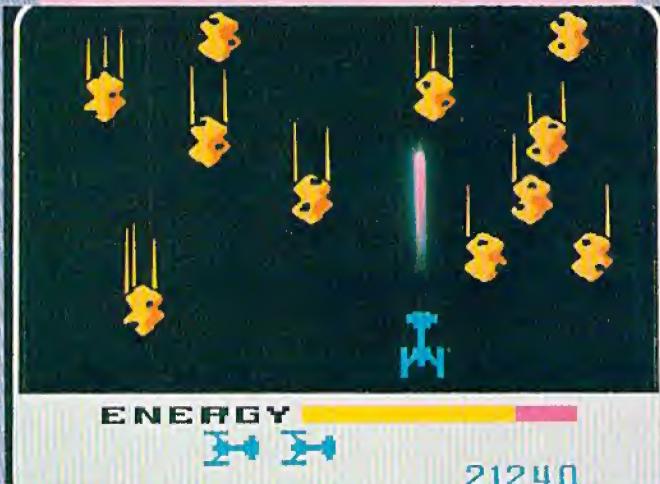
MEGAMANIA

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-29.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

MegaMania literally means "great hysteria" —but don't let that scare you away. Once you've entered this "space nightmare," as the game is appropriately subtitled, you'll find *MegaMania* to be one of the most original variations on the bottom-shooter concept ever created exclusively for the home.

Using the joystick controller, you travel horizontally below rows of colorfully geometric projectiles that spin or sway back and forth, dropping lower with each pass. If you make direct contact with the enemy, get hit by one of his missiles, run out of energy, or fail to clear a screen in less than 45 seconds, you lose one of three lasers. Once you've cleared the first screen, you must survive the next seven waves, each one offering a deadlier form of projectile.

The basic strategy for *MegaMania* sounds fairly simple — but you'll have to work at it. Think of it as the latest test of your *Space Invaders* skills. Start firing when the first enemy appears on the screen and continue to fire rapidly — you only have 45 seconds! But also learn to make each shot count in order to replenish and maintain your energy level. These two factors — time and energy — can turn your good score into a great one.

When the Projectiles begin their first descent, blast away enough of them to create a wide path through the center of the screen. This will create a safety zone for your Laser Cannon as the Projectiles reach the bottom and reappear at the top of the screen. With a little practice, you should be able to stockpile a few extra lasers — you're awarded one for every 10,000 points.

We're certain that even the best *Invaders* players will find surprising new challenges in *MegaMania*.
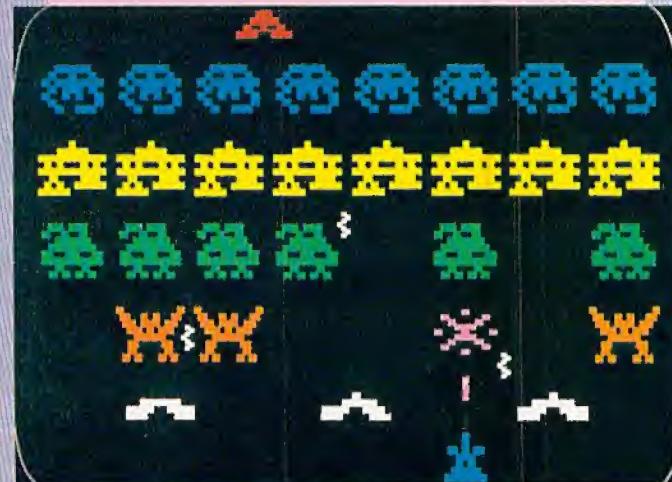
SPACE ARMADA

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$25.00-30.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 5
Longevity: 5

Many home game manufacturers have combined the basics of the original bottom-shooter — *Space Invaders* —with their own ideas to produce attractive, playable games. Mattel's *Space Armada* is another *Invaders* clone. Unfortunately it's below Mattel's usual level of quality.

The differences between the two games only serve to point out the superiority of the original. You start out with six laser cannons used to shoot at four rows of eight descending monsters. The three shields are now "bunkers," and the original command ship is now a "flying saucer." Sound familiar?

Naturally, even the worst copy might still be worth your time and money *if* it offered you exceptional game play. Unfortunately, however, *Space Armada* is less fun to play than the original.

The screen seems very cramped — like the game elements were put in with a shoe horn. And even in the slower "practice game" the monsters block your shot at the flying saucer too often. And when you get to the third screen, beware — it features a bomb that will kill you by simply landing near you.

Intellivision's disc control is also a problem. It's too awkward to handle the speed of this game — the fire button will soon have your fingers aching.

Not *everything* about *Armada* pales in comparison to *Invaders*, however. We found the monsters to be displayed in more attractive colors than the original.

We believe that Mattel could have created a more challenging bottom-shooter game. But if you feel that you *must* have an *Invaders*-type cartridge for your Intellivision system *Space Armada* is Mattel's best offer.
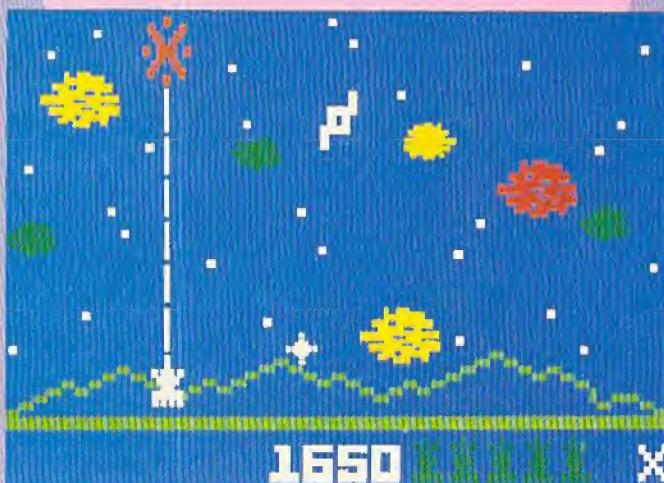
ASTROSMASH

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
N.A./$25.00-30.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 6
**Game Play: 7**
Longevity: 6

As a bottom-shooting game, we're very fond of *Astrosmash*. It's like an elaborate, free-falling variation of *Space Invaders*. And it contains enough extra elements (and game variations) to challenge all levels of armchair space gamers.

As in most bottom-shooters, you maneuver a laser cannon laterally via a joystick controller. Your goal is to blast and destroy your enemies as they descend or fly across the screen. Your enemies consist of: two sizes of falling rocks; two sizes of white spinners; guided missiles; and UFOs. Naturally, you gain points for each object that you shoot, but you also lose points for each object that makes it to the bottom of the screen or hits your laser gun.

We prefer Game Variation 4, although we practiced on easier levels. The basic strategies for *Astrosmash* consist mainly of common sense and practice: Always go after the more valuable enemies first (small spinners, guided missiles, and UFOs) and clean up the lesser targets when you have to. This will take some getting used to, but will also maximize your score.

Another good tactic involves shooting rocks. Rocks will often split in half when hit by your laser. Do your best to shoot both of these smaller pieces. They are each worth twice as much as the original rock. And keep in mind that in an emergency you can get out from under a falling rock by pressing the "Hyperspace" button. This will cause your laser to move randomly to one side.

We strongly recommend *Astrosmash* over Mattel's other bottom-shooter — *Space Armada*. The graphics *could* be more spectacular, but the game play is still "smashing."
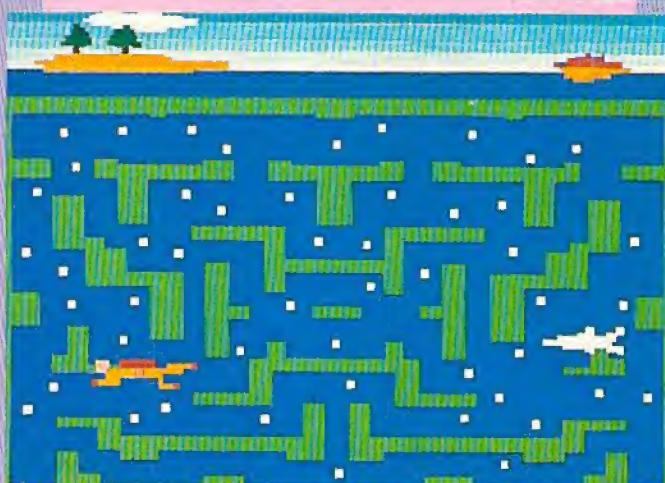
SHARK ATTACK

Games by Apollo, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-29.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 5
Game Play: 3
Longevity: 3

Some of you may have bought *Shark Attack* when it was titled *Lochjaw*. Apollo gave their cartridge a new title, but don't let that fool you. This watery (and expensive) maze game is still all wet.

The originality of *Shark Attack* (or lack of it) is best exemplified by game variation 5, "Gobble." You, the deep-sea diver, must swim around the maze collecting diamonds and avoiding sharks. You get a whopping one point per diamond after returning to the screen's center, called the shark cage. The shark cage is Diver-controlled, allowing you to temporarily escape the jaws of the hungry fish. But don't do this for anything other than an absolute emergency — gaining points is a slow enough process in this game.

Your only other adversary is a weak reproduction of the Loch Ness Monster. "Nessie" can be easily outmaneuvered by moving to one of the screen's four corners, called mystery caves, and tugging down on the joystick. This action will somehow send the monster back to her den momentarily and allow you to escape.

One bonus Diver is earned for every 100 points, which can take an hour or more (if you don't first sacrifice your Diver out of boredom). And the game is over when three Divers, plus any bonus men you have earned, have all been eaten.

Aside from its unimaginative game play and below average graphics, *Shark Attack* also forces the player to contend with annoyingly sloppy joystick response. We found maneuvering our diver to be a slow, painful process. Hitting the sides of the maze and going nowhere fast was a lot simpler. Our advice: Spend your money on one of the more classic maze games for your Atari system — like *Pac-Man*.

SKILL

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Imagic, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$39.95/$36.00-38.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 7
Longevity: NA

Although it takes place in a different city with different characters, *Beauty and the Beast* is actually Imagic's answer to *Donkey Kong's* theme, "climb the building to save the girl." Surprisingly, however, it's a beauty of a game that we recommend to video beasts of all skill levels.

To set the tone of this one-player-only cartridge, the game begins with a cheery rendition of Sinatra's "New York, New York." Suddenly, a "Bully" appears, dragging along a screaming young woman. Up he goes to the top of the Empire State Building (naturally), and the inevitable romantic rescue begins.

You, the climber, must use your Atari joystick and "jump" button to scale the 10 levels of this building to rescue her. While performing your video human

fly act, remember: You can only climb over closed windows. And if you veer off the edge of the building or get hit by a falling object (flower pot, bird, or scurrying rat) you will perform a spectacular high dive that costs you one of your three lives. You can, however, gain a bonus life by scaling two levels (screens) during the first 12 rounds (it gets much harder later).

The best strategy we found for rescuing our captive honey is a very pleasant one — kissing. At random intervals, she will throw a big, juicy kiss to the climber from above. Catch as many of these kisses as you can. They will make your climber invincible against all obstacles for about 10 seconds while a catchy tune plays on.

And we knew we had found a "keeper" when we lost a man — and enjoyed it. Each time the climber falls off the building, you get a spectacular view of him falling down every level you've managed to climb. It's a clever bit of animation but we hope that you won't have to witness that scene too often.

PICK AXE PETE

N.A.P. Consumer Electronics
for Odyssey2
$32.95/$26.00-29.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 3
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 6

Odyssey's new entry in the *Donkey Kong* lookalike contest doesn't offer heroic rescue attempts, or beautiful girls to test your video virtues. In fact, *Pick Axe Pete* manages to offer good, solid game play in a climbing game that revolves entirely around your hunger for GOLD!

Your goal is to guide Pete through ten screens, each representing a seven-tiered level of the Misty Mountain Mine. Greedy ol' Pete scrambles around the mine smashing gold boulders with his pick axe, gaining three points per nugget. Unfortunately, the pick can only be used for a few seconds at a time. Without it, all Pete can do is dodge the boulders by leaping over them, thus earning one point each.

The boulders fly out of a trio of revolving doors, located in the center of

tiers one, four, and seven. Pete can reach the doors by climbing ladders that appear and disappear randomly, but can enter them only by snatching up one of the keys that also show up now and then. Going through a door leads Pete into a new maze and earns him a new pickaxe.

You should be able to get the hang of smashing boulders after just a few minutes of play, but pay close attention to how you enter the revolving doors. Wait for a ladder to appear under a door (you always begin on tier three) and climb half way to the top. Do not climb right up into the door — you'll get stuck and lose valuable pick time. Instead, push your joystick to one side and hit the "jump" button. This will cause Pete to land to one side of the door and give you a running start at it.

We're not overly thrilled by the graphics of this game — there's just nothing spectacular about the way it looks. But we think most "level game" fans will enjoy *Pick Axe Pete's* challenging game play.

SKIING

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$22.95/$17.50-19.50
1 player
Rating: G
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 5

To tell you the truth, we're not that fond of winter. So we were pleased to find *Skiing's* snowy format simple enough for younger players, yet challenging enough to keep our most experienced gamers inside and out of the cold.

Activision's *Skiing* gives you the option of racing down either a slalom or downhill course. We chose the former — game 3, switch B. This is the 30-gate "expert" run. You control your skiier's direction (diagonally or straight down) with the joystick. You must ski through all the gates in the fastest time possible. For each gate your skiier fails to clear, you will be penalized five seconds.

If you crash into one of the gate markers or trees, rather than retiring to the lodge for hot chocolate, you rest for one second, then it's on with the race. (The course is also lined with gray moguls, but they only affect the downhill racing variation.)

The most difficult stretches in the course occur when you have to shift diagonally. The two spots where this is most evident are at gates 19 and 20 — where you have to execute a sharp left and sharp right in succession — and gates 7 and 8 where you must take a long sharp right. Make your turns earlier than you would expect to in these areas of the course — you have to compensate for Atari's slow joystick response. Making these turns is the only time you should move laterally. Keep your Skier pointed straight down at all other times. This will give you maximum speed and minimize your time.

The graphics of *Skiing* are typical of Atari sports cartridges. Skiers, gates, and trees are very boxy, though adequately represented for this type of game. And the sound effects are also limited, but we like the "whooshing" sound of passing through Gates. If you break 28.2 seconds, you're eligible for the Activision Ski Team — not an impossible goal.

VOLLEYBALL

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$26.95/$20.00-23.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

Atari's designers, tired of taking a beating from George Plimpton in those Mattel ads, went back to the drawing board and this time came up with a winner. *Volleyball* is indeed superior to Atari's older sports cartridges in terms of graphics and realism. It's also easy and fun to play (and no complicated keyboard controls to contend with, George).

The contest takes place on the beach at sunset. The waves pound the coast in the background as the ball casts its shadow on the sand. The rules of play are similar to real-life volleyball: You serve off the wrist from behind the real boundary line; you lose the serve if you knock the ball out of bounds: your players can pass to each other up to three times per turn; you are awarded points only when it's your serve; and so on. The first player to reach 15 points (and beat the other by at least two points) is the winner.

Whether you're playing a friend or the computer, your biggest challenge will be positioning your players accurately. Remember: The players need only contact the ball with any part of their bodies to hit it. Pressing the action button on your joystick controller adds velocity to your return, but will send the ball deep out of bounds if you're close to the net when you hit it. We found that aiming for the shadow of the ball and not the ball itself will give you a more accurate indication of the direction the ball is headed, especially with cross-court shots. And always use your passing ability to "set-up" your shot before slamming it over the net.

Although it will probably never outsell *Defender* or *Pac-Man,* Atari's new *Volleyball* is certainly a good, basic sports cartridge (with an attractive price) that will appeal to armchair athletes of all skill levels.

MOVIES

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Parker Bros.
for Atari VCS
$34.95/$27.00-30.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 5

The Empire Strikes Back is actually little more than a mildly challenging *Defender* variant bearing the fabled "Star Wars" name.

You are the pilot of a Snowspeeder (with *Defender* maneuverability) over the ice planet Hoth. Your task is to destroy the Empire's Walkers before they blow up the planet's power generator. You start with five ships and an endless supply of lasers. If you survive for two minutes the "Force" is with you, and your vehicle is invincible for 20 seconds.

Weaken (with about eight hits) as many Walkers as possible during these opening two minutes (it takes 48 hits to kill a Walker). Then use your "Force-time" to go in for the kill.

We like the graphics in *The Empire Strikes Back*. And we'd say that it offers acceptable game play for younger, less aggressive players. But you'll get a purer form of its *Defender*-like format from Activision's *Chopper Command*.

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$37.95/NA
1 or 2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: NA

Yes, the price *is* rather steep, but if you're a hardcore strategy buff, we doubt that you'll regret buying *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Atari's powerful new computer coding system (top secret) makes this game one of the most detailed and intriguing ever to come out of the labs.

Like the movie, the game stars Indiana Jones, eternal seeker of the lost Ark of the Covenant. In his journeys through 13 different rooms, Jones must find everything he needs to rescue the ark, while avoiding a host of environmental and manmade dangers that hinder his quest. Remember: These 13 rooms are actually 13 different games. You must quickly learn which of the game elements — snakes, whips, pits, knives, revolvers, etc. — can be used to your advantage.

Make no bones about it — this is not a "cutesy" cartoon game to entertain the kiddies. Mastering *Raiders* will require complex strategies, a good memory, and lots of time.
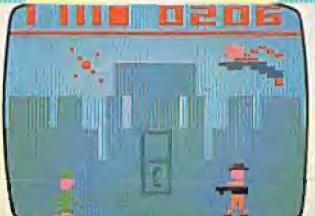
SUPERMAN

Atari, Inc.,
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$24.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

For its complex story line, intricate joystick maneuvers, and multiple onscreen activities, *Superman* could easily have been retitled, "A Day in the Life of a Super Hero."

And what a day — *Superman* (alias mild-mannered you-know-who) races against the clock to put Lex Luthor and his mob behind bars; rebuild the destroyed Metropolis Memorial Bridge; and return to the Daily Planet as Clark Kent to hand in his story. Lois Lane appears occasionally to revitalize the Man of Steel after he encounters power-sapping Kryptonite Satellites released by Lex Luthor.

Learn the playing field well: *Superman* offers 22 distinctive screens, each representing one block of the city. His X-ray vision allows him one block (screen) of foresight.

We recommend the two-player variation at difficulty setting A. This is a faster game, but it allows you to work as a team to rid Metropolis of evil in the name of truth, justice, and the American way.

TOWERING INFERNO

Vidtec
for Atari VCS
$29.95/$24.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 6

A fine adaptation on one of the most disastrous of the many disaster theme films, *Towering Inferno* is, quite frankly, a very noisy game. But after turning down the volume on our television set, we found it to be a hot game for the price.

As in the film, the Plaza Skyscraper is ablaze and hundreds are trapped on its upper floors. Amidst wailing sirens and clanging alarms, you direct your firemen (you get four) through the burning building, extinguishing or evading flames to reach the trapped victims and lead them to safety.

In variation 3, difficulty A (our favorite) you should always aim for the areas that are not totally engulfed by flames — move quickly! The spaces between flames will grow closer with each succeeding level.

Towering Inferno is actually a good test of joystick skills (if you keep the volume down) for non-violent players. Hardcore gamers, however, may quickly tire of its lack of shoot-'em-up action.

SPACE

COSMIC SWARM

CommaVid
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-28.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 6
Longevity: NA

Cosmic Swarm pits you against a force of interstellar, nest-building termites. This odd shoot-'em-up game mixes elements of *Space Invaders, Centipede, Asteroids,* and *Pac-Man.*

You control a free-moving, rotating space ship (a la *Asteroids*). You must shoot termites as they descend from the top of the screen. You must also contend with the nest blocks they drop. The fun begins when you shoot a block-carrying termite squarely on the bottom. Not only do you exterminate the termite, you "energize" all of the nest blocks as well (they change color). This is the only time any blocks can be destroyed.

Your only other task is to dock with the fuel ship each time it appears. Clear out the nests in the center of the screen first for a clear path to this floating gas pump.

We found that the game variations in *Cosmic Swarm* offer enough difficulty selections for broad shoot-'em-up appeal.

MISSILE COMMAND

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$24.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

A descendant of one of the arcades' most successful space games, Atari's *Missile Command* is a true home-video classic and perhaps the ultimate test of your bottom-shooter defense mechanisms.

From your missile base, armed with 30 antiballistic missiles (ABMs), it is your job to defend six Zardonian cities from the Krytolians' progressively aggressive air attacks. Your enemies, armed with interplanetary ballistic missiles (IPBMs) and cruise missiles, fire mercilessly at your colorful little skyscrapers. The only way to score during this fast-paced assault is to aim slightly ahead of your adversaries' IPBMs.

As is common to most Atari cartridges, game variables can be adjusted to almost any skill level. The factors involved are: target control speed, the intelligence of the cruise missiles, and the speed of your enemies. Our favorite, game 8, offers the more aggressive player a little bit of everything.

SPACE INVADERS

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$24.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 9
Longevity: 8

Of all the available bottom-shooting games that pit you against colorful rows of descending monsters, none can compare with the one and only home version of the classic arcade game — *Space Invaders.*

Here are the basics: You control a laser cannon capable of horizontal movement only. Your objective is to destroy six rows of eery aliens before they reach the bottom of the screen or wipe out all three of your ships. You are supplied with three stationary shields to hide under, but the aliens' lasers will slowly penetrate them.

We suggest that you shoot the outside vertical rows of aliens first. This will slow their descent. And always shoot the bonus command ship that occasionally flies across the top of the screen.

Atari offers 16 one-player and 96 two-player variations — enough to please all forms of *Invader* fans. But we prefer the version closest to the coin-op game — game 1 (or game 17 for two players) described above.

STARMASTER

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-29.00
1 player
Rating: X
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

We like *Starmaster*'s realistic point of view. The feeling of being inside your Spaceship looking out is one of the most original ideas in home video.

As the Starmaster of your galaxy, you must constantly scan your Radar Screen to determine which of your Starbases are under attack. Then switch to the appropriate Battle Screen and destroy all of the enemy Starfighters in each sector. You must accomplish this using the least amount of time and energy, while avoiding damage to your ship.

Constantly monitor your Mission/Attack Control Computer (MACC) to determine your Energy Level, and Space Date (both contribute to your score), plus the amount of damage done to your Lasers, Shields, Engines, and Radar. And stay away from dangerous enemy sectors if your Shields or Lasers have been knocked out. Repair this damage first by docking with one of your unoccupied Starbases.

We reserve Starmaster for home video wizards only!

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FISHING DERBY

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$22.95/$17.50-19.50
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 5
Game Play: 4
Longevity: 5

Fishing Derby is an easily operated, nonviolent game that brings a little bit of the ol' fishin' hole to inexperienced video anglers.

Seated on a dock over calm water, your goal is to maneuver your baited line in front of the six rows of fish that swim below you. Your joystick controls the depth and direction of your line, and the action button reels in your catch. Your score is determined by the weight of each fish you reel in — heavier (more valuable) fish swim at deeper levels. And your only adversary is an unpredictable shark that will eat your fish if you reel it past him. Maneuver your hooked fish back and forth until the shark swims away, then reel it in as fast as you can. And remember to always go after the heavier fish first.

We like the general theme of *Fishing Derby* — it's not overloaded with unnecessary game variables. Seasoned gamers, however, will quickly "catch their limit" in this made-for-kids cartridge.

LOST LUGGAGE

Games by Apollo, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-29.00
1 player
Rating: G
Graphics: 4
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 5

Lost Luggage will test the eye/hand coordination of younger airport travelers—and their laugh reflexes as well.

As a world traveler, waiting in the airport to claim your bags, you are suddenly attacked by a crazed baggage carousel—luggage flies in all directions. Your mission is to catch all 25 bags (for 3 points each).

Our favorite game variation (game 4, switch A) includes a bomb, concealed in a terrorist's black bag. Failure to catch this leatherette booby trap brings the game to an explosive end. Otherwise, the game ends after three bags get past you and open, scattering your underwear for all to see.

We found that *Lost Luggage* can be played a lot like tennis. Use the center of the screen as your base. When a bag flies to one side, rush over to catch it, then quickly return to the center. This will keep you from having to rush from one side of the screen to the other and miss valuable points.
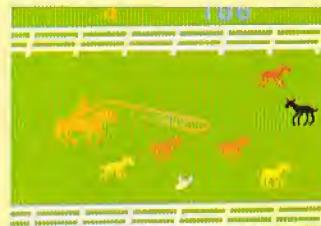
STAMPEDE

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS and
Mattel Intellivision
$22.95/$17.50-19.50
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 6

We may not know much about ropin' dogies, but we're pretty sure that buckeroos of all ages will get a heap of YAHOOs out of *Stampede's* unique game play and colorful animation.

As an experienced ranch hand (on horseback, of course), your job is to rope as many dogies as your rope can handle. The game is over if three dogies stray behind you. Our favorite variation is game 3, difficulty A—the dogies are far less predictable than in, say, game 1.

The secret to this game is to establish priority of herding. Concentrate first on the light brown "Jersey" cows — they're worth a healthy 25 points each. The dark red "Herefords" and the dark brown "Guernseys" are worth 15 points each. Try to save them for last — but don't let them get past you! The only exception to this ranch rule is the renegade Black Angus — nab this bonus dogie as soon as you see it.
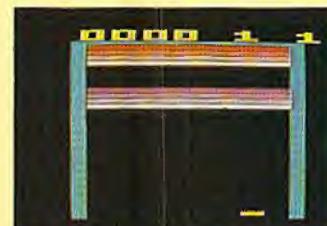
SUPER BREAKOUT

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$24.00-27.00
1 to 4 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 5
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 6

By adding a few game elements and changing the angle of play, Atari has transformed the arcade relic—*Pong*—into a reasonably challenging reaction/coordination game —*Super Breakout*.

Although there are actually five different games in this cartridge (plus two-player variations) we prefer game 7, difficulty A. It features a four-layer Brick Wall across the top of your screen, and a second four-layer Wall placed slightly below it. Your goal is to maneuver your paddle along the bottom of the screen and play vertical tennis against (and between) these walls. The bricks are eliminated by striking them with your ball.

This is an easy game to learn but the volley becomes progressively faster, and more difficult. There are, however, enough of Atari's typical skill levels for almost anyone to break smoothly into *Breakout*.
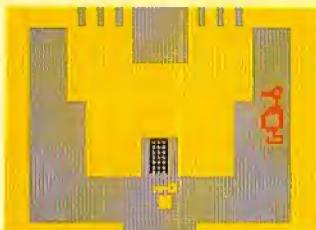
ADVENTURE

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$37.95/$27.00-30.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 4
Game Play: 4
Longevity: 4

Like most "storyline" games, *Adventure* leads you through a multi-room treasure hunt, laced with an assortment of deadly enemies. However, the biggest challenge of this complex game is figuring out what's going on.

Your objective is to locate a golden chalice, hidden in a maze patrolled by three Dragons and a large black Bat, and return it to the golden castle. Fortunately, however, you will also find a number of objects with which to fight back — swords, keys, bridges, and magnets. Our main complaint is that most of these game elements are too unpredictable — especially the Bat. Sometimes it will fly by and leave you a key to unlock a castle door and take nothing in return. Other times it will deposit a live Dragon at your feet and swipe your sword — leaving you defenseless.

Our suggestion, should you choose to accept this illogical mission, is to set aside a great deal of time for joystick experimentation. But even devoted strategists may soon tire of *Adventure's* excessive trial and error.
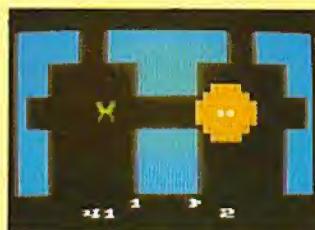
HAUNTED HOUSE

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$26.95/$20.00-23.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 5

Haunted House is another in Atari's series of "storyline" games, such as *Adventure* and *Superman,* whereby you are the hero sent on a do-or-die mission. This time, however, your mission takes place in a creaky old haunted mansion, complete with spooky sound effects and eery animation.

Only your eyes can be seen as you make your way through the darkness of the four-story mansion. Each floor has six rooms, plus a host of ghosts, tarantulas, and swooping bats. Naturally, these critters must all be avoided. Your goal is to find a key to the mansion's locked rooms and track down the hidden pieces of a golden urn. You may use matches to light your way through the darkness, but use them sparingly to rack up more points. And like a cat, you are given nine lives.

While *Haunted House* is a little too complicated to pick up and enjoy the first time through, we think that storyline fans of all ages will like this game after a reasonable amount of study time.

QUEST FOR THE RINGS

N.A.P. Consumer Electronics
for Odyssey2
$49.95/$41.00-46.00
1 to 3 players
Rating: X
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 9
Longevity: 8

Inspired in no small way by Tolkien's "Rings" trilogy, *Quest for the Rings* mixes the action of a video maze adventure with the strategies of an intricate board game.

Ideally played with three players, this game involves four heroes — each with special powers — on a multiple screen quest for ten lost Power Rings. Two players must each choose to represent one of these heroes, and then determine how many turns they will require to take possession of the Rings. The third player must act as the evil Ringmaster who hides the Rings and controls the deadly monsters that battle the heroes. The actual game action takes place on your TV screen, but strategy is planned and recorded on the elaborate game board included with the cartridge.

Quest for the Rings is not what we would call a high action game — strategy is the key to success. Even accomplished strategists should stay in the practice mode for at least an hour before actually playing.

UTOPIA

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$30.00-35.00
1 to 2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 9
Longevity: 7

We found *Utopia* to be just the strategy game for those who are convinced that *they* could do a better job of running the country. It's the ultimate game of "put up or shut up."

The two-player variation is most competitive. Each player has control over his or her own island kingdom, and a treasury of gold bars. Your goal is to gain more points than your opponent by improving the living conditions on your island.

Monitor your population and spend your money wisely to provide adequate food, housing, education, and protection for your people. You may also spend money on items like rebel soldiers and P.T. boats for acts of aggression that will hinder the growth of your opponent's country. And keep an eye on such variables as the climate. Don't build a school on a hurricane-plagued coastline.

Like most games of strategy, *Utopia* requires time to study and practice, but we think potential politicians of all ages will enjoy the challenge.

SKILL

CIRCUS ATARI

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$26.95/$20.00-23.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
**Graphics: 7**
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

Circus Atari is basically the same as Atari's *Breakout* cartridge — only better. Instead of a flat paddle bouncing a ball into a brick wall, *Circus Atari* features animated clowns that launch each other from a springboard into three rows of moving balloons.
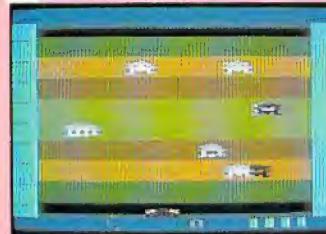
DEMONS TO DIAMONDS

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$26.95/$20.00-23.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 5

Demons to Diamonds will test shoot-'em-up skills. As demons pass through a colorful void, opponents attempt to blast the creatures for points. Hitting the "good" demons rewards you with a shower of diamonds to shoot for extra points.
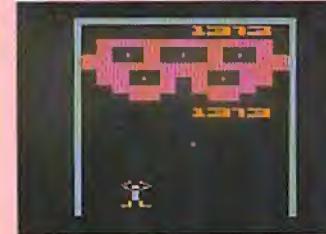
FIREBALL

Arcadia, Inc.
for Atari VCS
(with Supercharger)
$14.95/NA
1 to 4 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 6

Arcadia's cassette-style *Fireball* is a "hotter" variation of earlier cartridge games with the *Breakout* theme. Your goal as a juggler is to keep between two and six balls in motion, then hit them soccer-style (and handball-style) into brick walls.
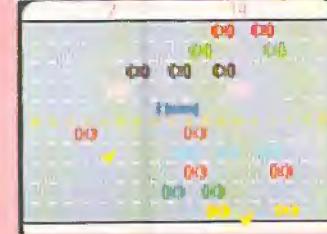
FREEWAY

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$22.95/$17.50-19.50
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 5

Freeway challenges younger players' skills in a deceptively "cute" format. Maneuver your chicken across a 10-lane highway while avoiding speeding vehicles as many times as possible within the time limit. Look for patterns in the traffic, but don't take all day about it.

FROGGER

Parker Bros., Inc.
for Atari VCS
$34.95/$27.00-30.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 6

Frogger is just as "cute" as *Freeway* but more challenging. Your goal is to maneuver your frog through a highway at rush hour; a river full of logs, turtles, and alligators; and finally to the safety of a lily pad garden. A good game for all skill levels.

K.C.'S KRAZY CHASE

N.A.P. Consumer Electronics
for Odyssey2
$34.95/$28.00-31.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
**Game Play: 7**
Longevity: NA

K.C.'s Krazy Chase (sequel to N.A.P.'s *K.C. Munchkin*) is a pleasant combination of *Pac-Man* and *Centipede*. K.C. must race through five mazes, eating Munchies and avoiding Munchers. He must also attempt to eat a deadly *Centipede*-style worm. Patterns are a must.

SUBMARINE COMMANDER

Sears Tele-Games
for Atari VCS
$24.95/NA
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 5
Longevity: 3

Excluding its elaborate graphics, *Submarine Commander* is a very basic shooting-gallery game. Your goal is to pilot a submarine through treacherous waters while shooting as many enemy tankers, destroyers, and P.T. boats as possible.
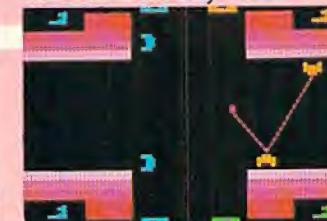
WARLORDS

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$24.00-27.00
1 to 4 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 7

Warlords is another *Breakout*-style game — with great graphics and a challenging medieval theme. You must shoot a ball (from your shield) at your opponent's kingdom to capture his king. To defend your own walls, you can catch your opponent's shot or simply deflect it back at him.

COSMIC CONFLICT

N.A.P Consumer Electronics
for Odyssey2
$22.95/$18.00-20.00
1 player
Rating: G
Graphics: 5
Game Play: 5
Longevity: 5

Cosmic Conflict offers little challenge to all but the least experienced players. As the commander of the Star Fighter Centurion, you must track and destroy 15 slow-moving enemy ships. An easily conquered game, unless you constantly fire at nothing.

JAWBREAKER

Tigervision
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$25.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 5
Game Play: 3
Longevity: NA

Jawbreaker is a simple maze game with *Pac-Man* undertones. You guide a set of teeth through a candy factory, attempting to eat as much candy as possible. Your only adversaries are smiling "Bullies" that will knock your teeth out on contact.

KING KONG

Tigervision
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$25.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 5
**Game Play: 3**
Longevity: NA

This poorly executed level game requires the player to rescue "the lady" from Kong's clutches by climbing the Empire State Building while jumping over bombs that the crudely animated ape hurls down at him. We'd rather play Coleco's *Donkey Kong* any day.

LADYBUG

Coleco, Inc.
for ColecoVision
NA/$28.00-30.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 7
Longevity: NA

Ladybug is a serious competitor to Atari's *Pac-Man*. Your all-too-familiar goal is to make your way through a colorful maze, eating dots and avoiding poisonous skulls and evil insects. But there's one twist to this game; revolving doors thrust the player into a new maze.

MONKEYSHINES

N.A.P. Consumer Electronics
for Odyssey2
$32.95/$26.00-29.00
1 to 3 players
Rating: G
**Graphics: 4**
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 7

Monkeyshines is an amusing rendition of video tag. The game takes place in a series of mazes occupied by four scampering monkeys. Your goal is to "tag" as many of them as possible without being tagged by a red monkey. A good game for beginners.

MOUSETRAP

Coleco, Inc.
for ColecoVision
NA/$28.00-30.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

Mousetrap is our favorite *Pac-Man* descendent. You are a timid mouse roaming a maze of hallways in search of cheese and other bonus snacks. Your main enemies are prowling cats that love to devour mice.

NIGHT STALKER

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$30.00-35.00
1 player
Rating: PG
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

Think of *Night Stalker* as a slightly more complicated variation of *Berzerk*. As you travel through a colorful maze of hedges, you are pursued by a pair of bats, an equally creepy spider, and a killer robot. We score it as a top contender in the search-and-shoot maze competition.

ROOM OF DOOM

CommaVid
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-28.00
1 player
Rating: G
Graphics: 4
Game Play: 5
Longevity: 5

We think you'll quickly tire of *Room of Doom's* below-average graphics and lack of surprises. Traveling through a seven-room maze, you confront vulnerable Assassins, a hydra, a bug, and a robot. We prefer *Berzerk's* more challenging game play.

SPORTS
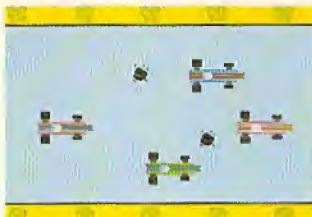
GRAND PRIX

Activision, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-29.00
1 player
Rating: G
**Graphics: 7**
Game Play: 4
Longevity: 4

We advise video race
drivers to pass up Activi-
sion's *Grand Prix*. We
like the graphics, but that
won't offset this game's
tedious game play and sim-
ple course. Spend the
extra few bucks on Atari's
Indy 500.

HOME RUN

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$19.95/$9.00-13.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 3
Game Play: 3
Longevity: 3

We found *Home Run* to
be nothing like *real*
baseball. You only have
three men on your team and
you must *always* run with
the ball to tag out a
runner — no throwing
allowed. The graphics are
equally primitive; the
players are small and boxy.
We'll pass on this cartridge.
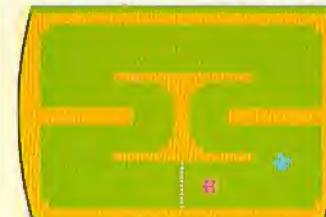
INDY 500

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$39.95/$30.00-34.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 4
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 5

Indy 500 is our driving
game choice for the Atari
system. We like the
inclusion of 14 game
variations, representing dif-
ferent courses under
varying road and weather
conditions. Our favorite
is Game 6 — "Crash 'n
Score" — a motorized
game of "kick the can."

NFL FOOTBALL

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$25.00-30.00
2 players
Rating: R
**Graphics: 8**
Game Play: 7
Longevity: 7

The full-color graphics,
and intense game strate-
gies of *NFL Football* are
superior to any football car-
tridge currently available.
Each player coaches a
five-man team with an arse-
nal of 160 offensive and
ten defensive sets. Reading
your playbook is a must.

PBA BOWLING

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$25.00-30.00
1 to 4 players
Rating: G
**Graphics: 8**
Game Play: 3
Longevity: 3

PBA Bowling offers very
realistic graphics. And we
like the options of lane
slickness and ball weight.
But when it comes to
challenging game play,
PBA Bowling throws a
gutter ball. If you *really* like
bowling, we suggest that
you go to a *real* bowling
alley.
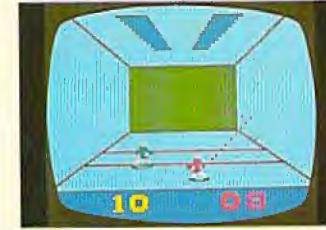
RACQUETBALL

Games by Apollo, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-29.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 4
Longevity: 4

The problem with Apol-
lo's "three-dimensional"
Racquetball is that it isn't
completely 3-D. Judging the
level of your player and
the ball is difficult. And the
ball itself casts an odd
shadow on the court, mak-
ing it overly hard to hit.
We found Atari's *Volleyball*
more enjoyable.

TRICK SHOT

Imagic, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$24.95/$19.00-22.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
**Graphics: 7**
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

Don't pass up *Trick Shot*
— a collection of nine
programmed billiards situa-
tions. Using your joystick
and action button, you can
apply "English" to the
cue ball for special "trick
shots." And the second
game variation contains a
complete billiards game.

TURBO

Coleco, Inc.
for ColecoVision
NA/$60.00-70.00
1 player
Rating: R
Graphics: 10
Game Play: 10
Longevity: 8

Turbo, the current "win-
ner" in the video racing
circuit, is included in Co-
leco's Expansion Module
#2—a plug-in steering
wheel and foot-operated
accelerator pedal. This is
a fast-paced driving test
that allows you 99 sec-
onds to pass as many cars
as possible.
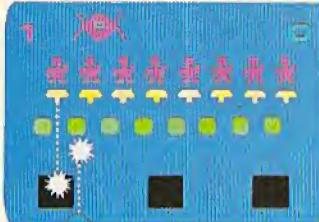
ALIEN INVADERS PLUS

N.A.P. Consumer Electronics
for Odyssey2
$22.95/$18.00-20.00
1 player
Rating: G
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 5
Longevity: 5

Alien Invaders Plus is actually more of a minus. You shoot from below at three rows of descending aliens. The bottom row consists of barriers, and the middle row of missiles protects the vulnerable top row — a simple game.

PHASER PATROL

Arcadia, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$69.95 (includes Supercharger)/NA
1 player
Rating: X
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

Phaser Patrol (included with Arcadia's Supercharger) offers a search-and-destroy space theme nearly identical to Activision's *Starmaster*. We applaud the high-resolution graphics and complex instrument panel — this is not a game for rookies.

SPACE BATTLE

Mattel, Inc.
for Mattel Intellivision
NA/$25.00-30.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: R
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 8

Space Battle is actually two strategic space games. You must battle eight to 15 alien craft on one screen, while simultaneously defending your Mother Ship from four enemies on another screen. Develop strict battle plans, and constantly monitor both battles via radar.

SPACE CAVERN

Games by Apollo, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$26.00-29.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 6
Game Play: 6
Longevity: 6

Space Cavern is another bottom-shooting game. Although we like the splashy graphics, game play is too predictable. Simply move your man to the middle and blast away as soon as you see the enemy. We still prefer *Space Invaders*.

STAR RAIDERS

Atari, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$37.95 (includes special controller)/$27.00-30.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: X
Graphics: 8
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

One of the earliest through-the-window space games, *Star Raiders* requires the usual strategic maneuvers of defending starbases, while monitoring controls. And we like the special controller included.

STAR VOYAGER

Imagic, Inc.
for Atari VCS
$31.95/$25.00-27.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: G
Graphics: 7
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

Star Voyager is a simplified through-the-window space game that appeals to more aggressive (less strategic) video pilots. Consult your radar screen to locate aliens and blast away! Then fly through a time warp to begin a more difficult wave.

STELLAR TRACK

Sears Tele-Games
for Atari VCS
$28.00/NA
1 player
Rating: X
Graphics: 3
Game Play: 8
Longevity: 7

Be advised: *Steller Track* is a theoretical battle game for skilled strategists only! Using computerized charts, maps, and status reports, you must determine the most logical battle plan. The computer will determine your success or failure and print the results on your screen.

ZAXXON

Coleco, Inc.
for ColecoVision
NA/$48.00-52.00
1 or 2 players
Rating: PG
Graphics: 10
**Game Play: 9**
Longevity: 8

A must for space pilots of all levels, *Zaxxon* transports you through incredibly realistic, 3-D cities, battling fighter planes, force-fields, and a deadly robot. Maintaining a straight course in this arcade descendent will help you dodge enemy missiles and destroy fuel tanks.

SUMMARY CHART OF GAMES AND RATINGS

Comparison of games featured from pages 52 through 63

Game	Manufacturer	System	Players	Rating	Graphics	Game Play	Longevity
Adventure	Atari	VCS	1	PG	4	4	4
Alien Invaders Plus	N.A.P.	ODY	1	G	6	5	5
Astrosmash	Mattel	INT	1	PG	6	7	6
Beauty and the Beast	Imagic	VCS	1	PG	8	7	NA
Circus Atari	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	G	7	8	7
Cosmic Conflict	N.A.P.	ODY	1	G	5	5	5
Cosmic Swarm	CommaVid	VCS	1	PG	7	6	NA
Demons to Diamonds	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	PG	6	6	5
Fireball	Arcadia	VCS	1 to 4	G	7	7	6
Fishing Derby	Activision	VCS	1 or 2	G	5	4	5
Freeway	Activision	VCS	1 or 2	G	8	6	5
Frogger	Parker Bros.	VCS	1 or 2	G	8	8	6
Grand Prix	Activision	VCS	1	G	7	4	4
Haunted House	Atari	VCS	1	PG	7	6	5
Home Run	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	PG	3	3	3
Indy 500	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	G	4	6	5
Jawbreaker	Tigervision	VCS	1 or 2	G	5	3	NA
K.C.'s Krazy Chase	N.A.P.	ODY	1 or 2	PG	7	7	NA
King Kong	Tigervision	VCS	1 or 2	G	5	3	NA
Lady Bug	Coleco	Vision	1 or 2	PG	8	7	NA
Lost Luggage	Apollo	VCS	1	G	4	6	5
Megamania	Activision	VCS	1 or 2	R	7	8	8
Missile Command	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	R	7	8	8
Monkey Shines	N.A.P.	ODY	1 to 3	G	4	7	7
Mousetrap	Coleco	Vision	1 or 2	PG	8	8	8
NFL Football	Mattel	INT	2	R	8	7	7
Night Stalker	Mattel	INT	1	PG	7	8	7
PBA Bowling	Mattel	INT	1 to 4	G	8	3	3
Phaser Patrol	Arcadia	VCS	1	X	8	8	7
Pick Axe Pete	N.A.P.	ODY	1 or 2	PG	3	7	6
Quest for the Rings	N.A.P.	ODY	1 to 3	X	6	9	8
Raiders of the Lost Ark	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	R	8	8	NA
Racquetball	Apollo	VCS	1 or 2	PG	6	4	4
Room of Doom	CommaVid	VCS	1	G	4	5	5
Shark Attack	Apollo	VCS	1 or 2	PG	5	3	3
Skiing	Activision	VCS	1	G	7	7	5
Space Armada	Mattel	INT	1	PG	6	5	5
Space Battle	Mattel	INT	1 or 2	R	8	8	8
Space Caverns	Apollo	VCS	1 or 2	PG	6	6	6
Space Invaders	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	R	7	9	8
Stampede	Activision	VCS INT	1	PG	7	7	6
Starmaster	Activision	VCS	1	X	7	8	7
Star Raiders	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	X	8	8	7
Star Voyager	Imagic	VCS	1 or 2	G	7	8	7
Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back	Parker Bros.	VCS	1 or 2	PG	6	6	5
Stellar Track	Sears	VCS	1	X	3	8	7
Submarine Commander	Sears	VCS	1 or 2	PG	7	5	3
Super Breakout	Atari	VCS	1 to 4	G	5	6	6
Superman	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	PG	7	8	8
Towering Inferno	Vidtec	VCS	1 or 2	PG	7	7	6
Trick Shot	Imagic	VCS	1 or 2	PG	7	8	7
Turbo	Coleco	Vision	1	R	10	10	8
Utopia	Mattel	INT	1 or 2	R	7	9	7
Volleyball	Atari	VCS	1 or 2	G	8	8	7
Warlords	Atari	VCS	1 to 4	PG	7	7	7
Zaxxon	Coleco	Vision	1 or 2	PG	10	9	8

PITFALL!
DONKEY KONG! SPACE HAWK!
DEMON ATTACK! BERZERK! DEFENDER!
COMMUNIST MUTANTS FROM SPACE!

HOW TO WIN AT HOME VIDEO GAMES will teach you how to play, *and master*, these and many more of today's most challenging home video games. We'll analyze each of the games step-by-step: objectives, controllers, elements, variations—*nothing has been left out!* For more-advanced players, we'll also give you top-level strategies that will turn your already good game into a *great* one!

What's more, **HOW TO WIN AT HOME VIDEO GAMES** includes descriptions and buying guide information for 70 game cartridges. We'll tell you what's new, what's hot, and what's not! If you don't already own a home video game system, we'll even help you select which one to buy.

HOW TO WIN AT HOME VIDEO GAMES includes the following cartridges designed for the Atari, Intellivision, Odyssey2, and ColecoVision game systems:

ADVENTURE
ALIEN INVADERS
—PLUS
ASTEROIDS
ASTROSMASH
BASEBALL
BEAUTY AND THE
BEAST
BERZERK
BOWLING
CIRCUS ATARI
COMMUNIST MUTANTS
FROM SPACE
COSMIC CONFLICT
COSMIC SWARM
DEFENDER
DEMON ATTACK
DEMONS TO DIAMONDS
DONKEY KONG
THE EMPIRE STRIKES
BACK

FIREBALL
FISHING DERBY
FOOTBALL
FREEWAY
FROGGER
GRAND PRIX
HAUNTED HOUSE
HOME RUN
INDY 500
JAWBREAKER
K.C. MUNCHKIN
K.C.'s KRAZY CHASE
KABOOM!
KING KONG
LADYBUG
LOST LUGGAGE
MEGAMANIA
MISSILE COMMAND
MONKEYSHINES
MOUSETRAP
NIGHT STALKER
PAC-MAN
PHASER PATROL
PICK AXE PETE
PITFALL

QUEST FOR THE
RINGS
RACQUETBALL
RAIDERS OF THE
LOST ARK
ROOM OF DOOM
SHARK ATTACK
SKIING
SPACE ARMADA
SPACE BATTLE
SPACE CAVERNS
SPACE HAWK
SPACE INVADERS
STAMPEDE
STARMASTER
STAR RAIDERS
STAR STRIKE
STAR VOYAGER
STELLAR TRACK
SUBMARINE
COMMANDER

SUPER BREAKOUT
SUPERMAN
TOWERING INFERNO
TRICK SHOT
TURBO
UTOPIA
VOLLEYBALL
WARLORDS
YARS' REVENGE
ZAXXON